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ABSTRACT

This documents consists of 12 issues of a journal that seeks to provide information and reviews concerning social studies textbooks; each issue consists of 16 pages. Contents in the 12 issues include: (1) California control over textbook content; (2) "skills" teaching in elementary-level social studies texts; (3) readability formulas; review of "Democracy's Half-Told Story"; (4) review of California's leading social studies textbooks for fourth graders; (5) a review of three leading American history textbooks for less able high school students; (6) review of "Magruder's American Government"; (7) religion in textbooks; (8) a discussion of how textbooks treat Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union; (9) the Holocaust and the textbooks; (10) a review of two social studies series for elementary schools published by Macmillan and Houghton Mifflin; (10) social studies in the primary grades; (11) an article by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. on multiculturalism; (12) Islamic history; (13) textbooks and the Middle East; (14) multiculturalism; (15) Afrocentric curriculum; (16) comparison of fifth grade American history books published in 1948 and 1990; (17) videodisk revolution; (18) Bill of Rights; (19) Columbus and the Quincentenary; (20) values and textbooks; (21) economics and the social studies curriculum (a survey of the subject and of the seven leading economic textbooks used in high school and a discussion of the appropriate age for teaching economics); (22) a discussion of whether or not textbooks shortchange girls; (23) multiculturalism and Euroculture; (24) textbook coverage of Europe; and (25) Columbus in the curriculum. All issues also contain brief notes of interest to social studies educators. (CRW)

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SOCIAL STUDIES REVIEW

Number 1-12 1989-1992

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SOCIAL STUDIES REVIEW

A PUBLICATION OF THE AMERICAN TEXTBOOK COUNCIL

Number 1 Spring 1989

TEXTBOOKS SHAPE LIVES AND UNDERSTANDINGS

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the *Social Studies Review*.

We intend to report to the nation's leading historians, social scientists, educators, public officials, and citizens on social studies textbooks through news bulletins and timely articles. Most important, we will begin to publish authoritative reviews of specific social studies textbooks, a heretofore unperformed service to elementary and secondary schools. Our goal—and the goal of the American Textbook Council—is to improve instructional materials and the curriculum through candid, expert assessment of what is good and what is bad in the field. We are glad to have you aboard. We hope that you will find this new journal informative, exciting, and sometimes provocative.

It is known that textbook selection at the district and school level can be a casual and haphazard affair. Buyers with the best intentions rarely have internal standards for textbook selection; many are misled by stylish graphics or impressed by ancillary materials that are supposed to make the task of teaching much easier. Since textbooks often seem fungible to their buyers, publishers' sales forces at times engineer adoptions based on financial incentives alone, fully divorcing selection from qualitative concerns.

The cumbersome process of textbook production and selection—and the high financial stakes of a nondiscretionary book market—work against change. While school districts and curriculum directors may be eager for higher-quality classroom materials, few publishers or other gatekeepers, from social studies editors to subject-content lobbyists, share this concern.

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When is a state bill relaxing control over social studies and other textbooks a questionable reform?

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"Skills" teaching in elementary-level social studies texts: scope-and-sequence charts promise many more skills than they deliver. A review of eight programs.

Page 8 . . . . . Readability Formulas: An Update

They assert that they already produce high-quality materials. Competing in a fierce market, publishers support current production and marketing practices. They hold that safe products make money, that heralded innovations of whatever quality do not. Many textbook authors, publishers, and editors, as well as social studies specialists, adoption committees, and subject-content lobbyists, are comfortable with current historiography and format.

While textbook publishers resist change, they accommodate and react to external forces. Should textbook critics and consumers sustain their demand for texts of improved literary merit and content, publishers will respond. As a result, textbook reform presents a cost-effective opportunity to improve teaching and student outcomes in history and social studies. Unlike revising salary schedules or shrinking class size, improvement of curricular materials does not require vast infusions of money and can occur with relative speed.

Despite growing interest in improved history and social studies textbook quality, a serious threat persists. Since the people involved with textbook creation and adoption often support current products, they may be able to staunch calls for reform. When public attention turns to other educational issues, as it inevitably will, the risk remains that textbook producers and curriculum authorities will go on just as before. Today the salient question is whether current reform pressures will have sufficient leadership, guidance, and direction to sustain real textbook improvements in the 1990s.

American history and other social studies textbooks are criticized by diverse individuals and groups—often with strong opinions, highly focused subject interests, and political ends. From the Texas-based Educational Research Analysts to the Council on Interracial Books for Children, textbook screening organizations have recently wielded great power in determining text content. Such groups, grinding their own axes, have little or no interest in brisk, moving historical narrative or balanced, sound historiography. Nor do they undertake their analyses under the direction of competent historians and scholars. Textbook producers are subjected to all kinds of pressures. But no system of expert appraisal, review, or criticism, one that would permit leading historians and scholars to judge instructional materials, has existed.

During the late 1980s American history and social studies textbooks have received closer scrutiny than they have in a generation. Several new studies, including reports by Gilbert T. Sewall for the Educational Excellence Network and Paul Gagnon for the American Federation of Teachers, have thrown into harsh light the literary and historiographic poverty of many leading American history textbooks, especially at the elementary and junior high school levels. Diane Ravitch and Chester E. Finn, Jr., have documented the appalling conditions of historical knowledge among high school students—and cited textbook improvement as a central area for reformers' attention.

Textbook quality is of concern to the National Commission on the Social Studies, the Bradley Commission on History, and the National Center for the Study of History. From former education secretary Terrell Bell to California school superintendent Bill Honig, governing authorities assert that textbooks have been "dumbed down," that content is trivialized, and that publishers indulge interest groups. The climate for revision and improvement of history and social studies textbooks is more auspicious than it has been in many years.

Responsible elementary- and secondary-level educators want expert assistance and counsel in selecting estimable history and social studies textbooks. They seek some authoritative guide and review system to help them decide what instructional materials to use and to avoid. To remedy this need, the American Textbook Council was created in late 1988, funded by the William H. Donner Foundation. It will now provide a new forum for historians, social scientists, educators, and others interested in history and social studies textbooks. The Council will fulfill two longstanding needs: first, to subject publishers' products to fair, impartial, and rigorous examination, publishing its conclusions in a

quarterly review; and second, to create a clearinghouse of information about history and social studies textbooks.

Above all, the Council is independent, dedicated to improving the standards of textbook review and the writing of history and social studies textbooks. The Council is not an advocacy group or thought police. It makes no effort to cleanse textbooks, to buttress one point of view, to prove that history and virtue are pointed in a single direction, or to purge textbooks in accordance with preordained schemata. The Council plans to advance history and social studies curricula by establishing a national review service for instructional materials and undertaking special projects in the field, in short, by encouraging the production of textbooks that embody vivid narrative style, stress significant people and events, and reflect accurate, balanced historiographic approaches. ★

CALIFORNIA CONTROVERSY

We have recently learned of troubling textbook battles in California that may directly affect the efforts there to improve the social studies curriculum and the quality of textbooks in general.

In 1987, California adopted a new history-centered curriculum that increases the scope and substance of social studies. This reform effort—and other curricular advances in the state—has drawn wide national acclaim. For textbook publishers, however, it threatens to upset the apple cart.

California controls over 10 percent of the nation's textbook market. Because it adopts its elementary and junior high school textbooks at the state level, the publishing industry closely watches the process. The new curriculum in social studies would require publishers to develop radically new texts to meet state guidelines.

For publishers, this is an expensive proposition, one that they are doing their best to avoid. To make money, publishers claim they must be able to market elementary-level products in 80 percent of the nation's school districts and pick up 15 percent of the market in each. Since publishers fear that the new California social studies curriculum will fail to radiate into other states, they are reluctant to make fundamental changes in texts for what may turn out to be a thin market.

Of two related bills on textbooks currently in the California legislature, the so-called Maddy Bill is more basic. It is strongly supported by the American Association of Publishers. The bill would create a system of "rolling adoption" for textbooks, allowing textbook publishers a more flexible system of review.

The concept of "rolling adoption" is not without promise. But the terms of the Maddy Bill could allow publishers to obtain state approval of texts that do not make any genuine effort to meet the intentions of state curriculum frameworks. One early version of the Maddy Bill directed publishers only to "generally respond" to the "overall direction" of the framework; it required only that materials be factually accurate and based upon an "intellectually defensible pedagogy." But who is to determine—especially these days—what is intellectually defensible? The Maddy Bill, if enacted in one current form, could enable publishers to interpret state guidelines as they wish.

No one says the California system is perfect. But the problems in the system derive mainly from marketing excesses, not from state overview of materials. Like other big states, California suffers a system by which publishers cozy up to "key influencers" and textbook buyers. On April 28, reporters Angie Cannon and Michael Taylor began an extensive investigative series in the *San Francisco Chronicle*: They called the state marketing system "riddled with conflicts of interest and questionable sales practices" and even documented palmy goings-on hosted by one publisher at Laguna's Ritz-Carlton Hotel, replete with a sundown cruise of Newport Harbor.

It is naive to believe, as suggested, that the Maddy Bill would curb such baroque marketing practices. Virtually all abuses of textbook

selling—all the seductions and kickbacks and special deals so widely given to educators—occur at the local level.

Under the current textbook adoption process, in spite of its imperfections, the state of California remains a formidable force for progress. The premise that local adoption promotes high-quality instructional materials is not at all self-evident. If textbook adoption were to become the perogative of individual schools and local districts, the clout needed to use the state frameworks to move toward improved instructional materials could instantly disappear. By atomizing the market, it could render California's state curricula a set of local options, allowing the publishing industry to circumvent the challenge that new state curriculum reforms now pose.

The AAP has made much of the Council for Basic Education's support for the Maddy Bill. Although the Council recently executed a volte-face on the issue, why it undertook the lobbying effort in the first place remains unclear. Belatedly, the Council discerned that the Maddy Bill would reduce the state's leverage with publishers to upgrade textbook content. The Council picked the wrong state at the wrong time and, in the end, appeared either confused or cynical, depending on your point of view.

After all, California's curriculum frameworks have set high standards for instructional materials and have spurred publishers toward creating improved mathematics, science, reading, and language arts books. The Maddy Bill could set such elaborate conditions for rejecting textbooks that it could make it difficult to weed substandard books out of the classroom.

The Maddy Bill's advocates have it several ways. Some assert that California's market leverage and concentration of power indict the current textbook selection process. According to this view, publishers don't believe they can make an investment when the process is so unstable and overwhelming. Others charge that California's vaunted leverage over publishers is an illusion, as state proceedings in the past have made textbook publishers unwilling to respond to calls for change. The stakes are too high to make competition worth the risk, some critics say, adding by turns that state-level textbook adoption is clumsy, corrupt, unfair to publishers, and educationally unsound.

What makes the Maddy Bill a bad idea? Unless it is fully amended to ensure textbook compliance with state guidelines, it accommodates the curricular status quo in the nation's premier state, protecting the interests of the publishing industry on the pretext of local control. Should it be enacted in present form, the advancement of the history-centered state curriculum in social studies and other estimable state curricula could suffer huge blows. Its passage could demonstrate once again the political power and intellectual indifference of some textbook publishers. ★

— Gilbert T. Sewall

TEN STATES

STATE	ESTIMATED NATIONAL SALES (millions)	PERCENTAGE OF NATIONAL SALES
1. *California*	$ 155.2	10.2
2. *Texas*	132.6	8.7
3. New York	112.7	7.4
4. Illinois	84.0	5.5
5. Pennsylvania	67.8	4.4
6. Michigan	63.6	4.2
7. Ohio	61.1	4.0
8. New Jersey	60.3	3.9
9. *Florida*	58.5	3.8
10. *North Carolina*	43.5	2.9

SOURCE: Association of American Publishers Industry Statistics, 1986

The top ten textbook-buying states comprise 55 percent of the national market. Four of these states—California, Florida, North Carolina, and Texas—are adoption states. The "big four" alone control more than 25 percent of the national market. The leverage of these few states on textbook publishers, then, is enormous.

HOW A TEXTBOOK WINDS UP IN A CALIFORNIA CLASSROOM

If a school district uses state funds to buy books, it must purchase them from a list approved by the state Board of Education.

1. CURRICULUM GUIDELINES

In each subject area, a 16-member state Curriculum Commission, an advisory panel to the state Board of Education, produces "curriculum guidelines" for the selection of state textbooks on a seven-year cycle.

2. SUBMISSION

Publishers wanting adoption submit texts to reviewers and to display centers, where the books are available for public inspection.

3. EVALUATION

About 70 volunteer educators selected from about 300 applications—teachers and school administrators—review the books; the state trains the evaluators.

4. RANKINGS

The evaluators rank the books submitted by a complicated scoring formula and make recommendations to the state Curriculum Commission.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Curriculum Commission makes final textbook recommendations to the state Board of Education.

6. OFFICIAL APPROVAL

The Board approves books for the official state list.

7. DISTRICT PURCHASE

Administrators in each of California's 907 school districts now set up their own selection committees to evaluate which state-approved texts their districts will buy, and publishers fan out across the state to promote their books.

★

SOURCES: California Department of Education, San Francisco Chronicle

ELEMENTARY GRADE TEXTBOOKS: A CASE OF OVERSKILL

By Kathleen Carter Nagel and Arthur Woodward

Open the teacher's guide of an elementary social studies series and you cannot help being impressed by colorful "scope and sequence" charts, some of them as long as twenty pages. These charts profess to convey how thoroughly textbooks cover content and skills and mirror instructional design, often mandated by state or local syllabi. In other words, the charts are supposed to match skills to text.

Unfortunately, the reality is quite different. Our analysis of eight recently published elementary social studies series reveals that: (1) the actual teaching of skills is far less than what the charts imply; (2) skills are likely to be taught in a segmented rather than an integrated manner; and (3) ease of measurement often determines the types of skills emphasized.

The number of skills and subskills in current elementary textbooks has burgeoned. In our study we identified six major skill categories: map and globe; charts, graphs, and diagrams; study and research; critical thinking; time and chronology; and citizenship. Publishers divided these skill strands into various subskills, which could number as many as fifty-four.

Scope and sequence charts give the impression that each major skill receives balanced and equal coverage. However, we found this not to be the case. Series tended to emphasize traditional map-and-globe exercises over more esoteric skills like critical thinking or citizenship, which was often the most ill-defined skill.

Unlike comparable charts of basal reading or mathematics programs, most of these social studies charts did not indicate the page that addressed particular skills and subskills. In addition, they listed pages where the named skill did not appear or omitted pages that, according to the annotations, provided

exercises related to the skill. We called these "phantom" skills.

The problem of phantom skills was pervasive, as illustrated by the treatment of critical thinking in the fifth grade texts of each series. This particular skill included: interpreting, comparing, contrasting, and classifying information; drawing inferences from facts, hypothesizing, and making predictions; learning to make decisions and judgments, identifying and defining propaganda; formulating questions for problem-solving; defending a point of view; and identifying cause and effect.

Among the many skills under this topic, we focused on the coverage of "inferring and hypothesizing." A comparison of scope and sequence charts with actual textbook pages in these programs revealed major discrepancies. Sometimes, promised skills exercises turned out not to exist, and sometimes skills had little to do with either inferring or hypothesizing.

For example, after the class had read about the hardships at Valley Forge and the privations the colonists suffered during the Revolution (e.g., food shortages, the British taking over their houses, melting down pewter for cannonshot), the guide directed the teacher to ask: "Why is it sometimes hard to make choices? Do we sometimes have shortages today? If so, what?" While these questions may have merit in themselves, they do not meet the need for fully developed teaching and learning activities.

Inference skills also received superficial treatment. Most pages referred to review sections, which required students simply to answer factual recall questions like "Why is Africa a less-developed continent than Europe?" or "Why did the people of Kush settle south of the cataracts?" One "checkup" question designed to test these subskills asked: "Imagine that you lived in colonial times. Would you have preferred living on a farm or in a city? Give reasons for your answers."

We also found many cases of mislabeling of skills. Simple questions and activities were called critical-thinking skills even though they had little or no relation to such skills. Such questions were erroneously credited with requiring a high level of cognitive response from students.

One program included such "Reading for Thinking" questions as the following: "In what sense did World War I cause World War II?" The teacher's guide told the teacher: "Have students read [specific pages in the text] to get the background necessary to answer these questions." Since students could cite a number of causes from reading the text, the questions could just as well have been labeled "Reading for Answers."

Most exercises in chapter or unit review sections emphasize activities that only require factual recall of content. They often instruct students to consult maps or charts within the chapter to answer questions that are short and direct, calling only for simple interpretations. In one series, for example, students were told: "Look at the time line. When did the Spanish Armada attack England?"

In "Things to Think About" sections, where one would expect students to use critical-thinking skills—an expectation reinforced by publisher statements—we found that programs uniformly made little effort to differentiate these questions from factual recall questions other than those that occasionally called for an opinion. A question like "Why have rivers been more important to Africans than oceans?" may offer students an opportunity to compare and contrast information, but the narrative supplies all necessary information.

Skill pages are a popular and visible means by which publishers can show how they incorporate extra practice and teaching into their programs. Such pages certainly abound. Of the eight programs analyzed, three programs included one skill page per chapter; three programs, one or more skill pages per unit; and two programs included none.

All but one text included a special unit whose primary purpose was to review map-and-globe skills presented in previous grades and to introduce new information. Most programs interspersed the narrative with simple questions designed to have students periodically stop reading and use the graphic. In some programs these questions referred only to the

immediate map at hand ("Look at the temperature map. What is the average temperature of your part of the United States?"). Questions that required students to consult more than one graphic source were rare.

In general, programs with longer map-and-globe units (up to 55 pages) were more successful than ones with shorter units in reviewing and teaching skills. They usually asked detailed questions about the same graphic instead of asking just a few superficial questions before moving on to the next exercise. They also more consistently identified a purpose for each activity ("Students learn how a series of historical maps can illustrate the changes that take place over a period of time").

All the programs, incorporating a range of graphic aids, from charts, graphs, tables, and photographs to maps of all kinds, helped students to understand content and apply social studies skills. How well these graphics actually served their purpose varied with each program. At a minimum, the text narrative usually referred to the appropriate graphic with a page citation, but when questions or lesson-plan suggestions directed students to use these aids—not just acknowledge them in the course of reading the text—they often determined to what extent informal teaching of skills occurred in the program.

Surprisingly, some programs made little instructional use of graphics. In one series maps appeared on pages with related content, but the text included no direct reference to the information these maps contained. For example, one page showed a map marked "Trade Routes of the Middle Ages" and took three paragraphs to describe "The Growth of Trade." Yet nowhere did the narrative refer to the products traded. This lack of coordination was typical of the many "missed opportunities" for informally applying skills and enriching content.

Fortunately, the same book sometimes used graphics well: two graphs on one page presented information about the populations and land areas of the United States, the Soviet Union, and China. Questions included: "Which [country] has more people?"; "Which has more land?"; "Which has a larger population density?"

In scope and sequence charts, publishers list broad categories of skills, from map-and-globe to citizenship. However, skills that are easily measured and that lend themselves to simple, self-contained exercises receive the most attention. Such complex skills as critical thinking, which require more time and effort for students to master, receive virtually no attention.

In their marketing materials publishers state that their programs stress and apply these skills throughout the texts. But exercises often ask students to locate places and names in history but rarely to consider the larger issues of why these same events and persons shaped history.

Highly visible practice sections in chapter and unit reviews, skill pages, and map-and-globe exercises usually concentrate only on recall. Names and places may carry over from the chapter and unit information into the skill activities. But these activities could just as easily apply to one chapter as to another. Skills often do not relate to the graphics that liberally sprinkle the pages of the daily lessons.

Why do these materials include so many skill lessons and exercises and present them so poorly? Traditionally, social studies has been one of the content or knowledge-based subjects of the elementary school curriculum. Its purpose has been to convey age-appropriate information and concepts to educate young people about their country, culture, and history and about the wider world.

When skills exercises serve a purpose other than to instruct, the learning process inevitably becomes repetitive, overworked, or bogus. When they are driven by lists, syllabi, and mandates, these exercises cease to be authentic means toward skill building.

Publishers need to integrate skill learning and its applications into a social studies program that does more than just satisfy testing requirements. We can then reasonably expect that students will be able to apply these skills to content areas and real-life situations beyond the immediate text.

Publishers should give at least as much attention to ensuring that students have opportunities to develop sound social studies skills as they do to developing impressive, albeit misleading lists of such skills on persuasive, marketable scope and sequence charts. ★

Social Studies Series Analyzed

Follett Social Studies, Chicago: Follett, 1983

Holt Social Studies, New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1986

Macmillan Social Studies, New York: Macmillan, 1982

Our Nation, Our World, New York : McGraw Hill, 1983

People and Their Heritage, Boston: Ginn, 1983

Scott, Foresman Social Studies, Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman, 1983

Steck-Vaughn Social Studies, Austin, Tex.: Steck-Vaughn, 1983

The World and Its Peoples, Morristown, N.J.: Silver Burdett, 1984

This article is adapted from a forthcoming study by Kathleen Carter Nagel of the Education Materials Associates and Arthur Woodward of the University of Rochester. Their entire report may be ordered from Arthur Woodward, 302 Lattimore Hall, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY 14627.

READABILITY FORMULAS: AN UPDATE

By Peter Cannon

In textbook circles readability formulas have almost legendary notoriety. For many decades they have exerted a powerful influence in composition and prose, as publishers respond to the belief among educators that students only understand language written to their grade level.

These formulas—be they the Dale-Chall, Spache, or Fry—are relatively easy means to measure the difficulty of texts. They measure the length of sentences, check vocabulary against approved word lists, monitor word length, and count the number of syllables. They do not take into account content difficulty, the organization of ideas, or narrative and stylistic flourish.

During the 1980s, readability formulas have come under wide attack. The International Reading Association and the National Council for Teachers of English have cautioned against their use.

Bonnie B. Armbruster and other members of the Center for the Study of Reading at the University of Illinois have called attention to the problem. "Decisions about the matching of textbooks to children are probably best made by trained and experienced judges—the teachers and librarians who have worked with children and who have witnessed the interactions of a lot of children with a lot of books," Armbruster and her colleagues wrote in 1985. "We think the problem of matching textbooks and readers is vastly overrated," the researchers said. "Children can read and understand textbooks within a wide range of difficulty, and it is probably to their advantage to do so."

Nonetheless these formulas remain, mainly because textbook buyers often insist on them, hungry for guidance, and wanting to believe in some "scientific" system through which experts have determined textual difficulty.

Since the 1920s, readability researchers have cautioned editors, publishers, and schools that they not use the formulas rigidly or mechanically, according to Jeanne S. Chall, an eminent Harvard researcher and a developer of the classic Dale-Chall readability formula. Wise editors have echoed such concerns, asserting that readability formulas are only valid for prose that has a natural style. Abuse begins, they say, when scales are used in the editing process to simplify and "dumb down" prose.

Unfortunately, these warnings have gone largely unheeded. Critics charge that editors rewrite texts in order to meet readability requirements. "In the process, they may or may not change the essential meaning of the original, but, almost necessarily, they remove all individuality from the writing, homogenizing it so that it is in fact nearly unreadable,"

said Frances FitzGerald in her landmark 1979 study of history texts, *America Revised*.

In the last five years textbook buyers have come to rely less on readability formulas. As a result, publishers are willing to include story materials that do not strictly conform to these yardsticks. Basal readers at the elementary level, for example, now include more works by contemporary authors than they previously did. Given assurances that their prose will appear as written, an increasing number of talented authors are pleased to sell reprint rights for textbooks.

Still, overreliance on readability formulas remains a serious problem. Though many education officials and publishers profess disinterest in them, the formulas are used informally—even secretively—because they remain a handy gauge of deciding how "difficult" a textbook is. Enough important textbook markets still use these formulas, however, to keep editors tethered to them. Says Harriet Tyson-Bernstein, a textbook critic: "As long as any major market area misuses this tool as a primary criterion for textbook adoption, children will continue to be bored and confused by much of what they read in school." Like others, she urges "more sensitive procedures for ensuring a match between the book and the child's reading ability."

Reading formulas are unlikely to fade away. Indeed, researchers in recent years have developed new formulas that attempt to measure textual content and cohesion. These approaches focus on memory and learning, not on textual features such as vocabulary and sentence length. Beverley L. Zakaluk and S. Jay Samuels, the editors of *Readability: Its Past, Present, and Future* (International Reading Association, 1988), point out that prior knowledge of a topic as well as word recognition skill have significant effects on text comprehensibility.

Zakaluk and Samuels have devised a procedure to predict text difficulty that employs cognitive psychology. They claim their method can be used to help match students with appropriate reading materials—not as a shortcut in textbook selection. The University of Pittsburgh's Isabel Beck is also applying cognitive psychological research to the analysis of textual readability in social studies texts.

While some researchers are attempting to devise more sophisticated readability gauges, others have rushed to the defense of traditional formulas. In the *Journal of Reading* (January 1989) Edward B. Fry calls them "one of the best documented educational tools that we have." He derides writers who would use what amount to "quill pens" in textbook construction. Concludes Fry: "Perhaps some people do not like readability formulas because they are so objective, or even so mechanical, if you prefer. In fact, most of the formulas are so objective that they can be worked by a computer."

Computer technology has served to simplify the task of applying traditional formulas. For example, the Minnesota Education Consortium offers software that automatically counts syllables and consults vocabulary lists. By removing the tedium of manual labor, these programs make the process easier and more convenient. So far no one (including MEC) has produced software that is capable of linguistic analysis beyond this basic quantitative level.

The putative benefits of readability formulas do not counterbalance the opportunities for their abuse. They are fairly crude instruments, all the more dangerous when presented to gullible educators tarted up with all sorts of scientific pretensions and promises. Edward B. Fry nothwithstanding, readability formulas seem to be a textbook fashion in decline, and none too soon. ★

NOTED IN BRIEF

★ Historian Paul Gagnon's long-awaited report on the presentation of democratic values in American history textbooks will soon be released. On July 20 the American Federation of Teachers will issue the final report, which will assess the five most popular high school texts and serve as a companion piece to his 1987 study, *Democracy's Untold Story*. Those

interested should write or call Ruth Wattenberg, the Education for Democracy Project, American Federation of Teachers, 555 New Jersey Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20001; (202) 879-4530.

★ The Bradley Commission on History in Schools—established in 1987 to review and make recommendations for the improvement of the school history curriculum—has begun to publish a newsletter called *History Matters!* The newsletter contains some real nuggets for those interested in curricular reform—and textbooks. For example, the first issue included the results of a Commission survey that addressed the question: What do teachers perceive as major obstacles to history in the elementary school curriculum? Textbooks were by far the most frequently identified, cited by 50 percent of the elementary school teachers who responded to the survey. Based on the supposition that history should be a cornerstone of the academic program, the newsletter intends to keep its readers informed of the Commission's ongoing work and of news and information about school history. It will serve as a supplement to the Commission's 1988 report, *Building a History Curriculum: Guidelines for Teaching History in Schools*. For more information write or call Elaine Wrisley Reed at the Bradley Commission, 26915 Westwood Road, Suite A-2, Westlake, OH 44145; (216) 835-1776.

★ Meaningful textbook reviews are hard to come by. Still, some useful assessments may be found here and there. One journal of note is *The History Teacher*, published by the Society for History Education in affiliation with the American Historical Association. This quarterly publishes articles on a variety of pedagogical and historiographic issues; it contains critical review essays on textbooks and other instructional materials. For example, the August 1988 issue includes a provocative essay on science and technology in U.S. history textbooks. It reviews some freshly published textbooks in European and American history, but nota bene, at the college level, rarely the school level. *The History Teacher* is available for $22 per year through the Department of History at California State University, Long Beach, CA 90840; (213) 985-4431.

Lest anyone interested in review of historical materials forget, the Johns Hopkins University Press publishes a quarterly called *Reviews in American History*, edited by Stanley I. Kutler. This excellent publication does not review textbooks. But it does compile lively, scholarly reviews of important new trade and university press books. It is available for $18 per year from the Johns Hopkins University Press, 701 West 40th Street, Baltimore, MD 21212.

★ The Children's Literature Center of the Library of Congress has issued a pamphlet picking some of the best recent books for preschool through junior high school-aged children. Entitled *Books For Children*, it aims "to gather a selection of picture books, fiction, and nonfiction that will appeal to children, stimulate their imaginations, and meet their needs for information." The books are listed in seven categories: picture stories and rhyme (up to 6 years old); easy-to-read stories and history (6-8 years old); folktales, Bible stories, song and history (6-8 years old); tales of mystery, humor, and adventure (8-12 years old); folktales, history, verse, and nature (8-12 years old); fiction (12-14 years old); biography, history, and science (12-14 years old). Textbook editors and writers could learn much from the vivid, engaging books of the kind listed here. To obtain a copy, send $1 to the Consumer Information Center, Department 116V, Pueblo, CO 81009.

★ *The Concord Review* is a fascinating new quarterly journal edited by Will Fitzhugh featuring history essays by high school students. Contributors to a recent issue represent a broad geographic range, from across the United States to Canada and Australia. In the spring 1989 issue, essays cover subjects from the War of 1812 and Abolitionist tactical thinking to the Harlem Renaissance and Sufism. These essays exhibit the heights of historical writing and insight that high school students can achieve. Teachers might use the review as a model for student research papers. For more information write to *The Concord Review*, P.O. Box 661, Concord, MA 01742. Subscription orders—$25 for one year; $30 foreign—should be addressed to *The Concord Review*, P.O. Box 476, Canton, MA 02021.

★ The *International Journal of Social Education* devotes its Winter 1987-88 issue to a survey of current college textbooks in the fields of anthropology, political science, and American history. Much of the issue is germane to high school texts and includes cogent assessment of the literature. As William A. Percy and Pedro J. Suarez note in their introductory essay, "All texts need drastic improvements in style, facts, interpretations, objectivity, coverage, and conception. Above all, the texts bore." Other articles include "Current College Texts in Comparative Government and Politics," by James F. Ward, and "The Selling of Clio: American History College Survey Textbooks," by Michael B. Chesson. Those wishing to order a copy of this issue (vol. 2, no. 3) should send a check for $4, payable to Ball State University, to the editor, John E. Weakland, Department of History, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306.

★ The School Division of the Association of American Publishers has recently released an excellent 36-page booklet entitled *Helping Your Child Succeed in School*. Oddly enough, the pamphlet does not focus on textbooks or instructional materials. What it does do—and very successfully—is address many broad concerns of parents who want to help their children get the most out of their education. It contains sound advice on how parents should prepare their children for school, create good learning and study habits, and sustain these habits throughout their children's education. It also features tips on learning methods, instructional materials, science memory shortcuts, taking good notes, and scheduling schoolwork. To obtain a copy, send $1.50 to the School Division, American Association of Publishers, 220 East 23rd Street, New York, NY 10010.

COMING IN THE FALL ISSUE:

REVIEWS OF

- Leading Civics Texts
- New Textbooks to Present "Global Insights"
- Henry E. Graff's *America: The Glorious Republic*
- California's Elementary State History Textbooks

BAD HISTORY TEXTBOOKS IN LITERATURE DEPARTMENT

George Orwell taught briefly at a small private school outside London, long before he became famous as the author of *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-four*. This experience is reflected in one of his early novels, *A Clergyman's Daughter* (1935). His heroine, Dorothy Hare, takes up teaching. In the classroom it is not all smooth sailing. She finds, writes Orwell, "a horrid little book called *The Hundred Page History of Britian*." A passage reads:

> After the French Revolution was over, the self-styled Emporer Napoleon Buonaparte attempted to set up his sway, but though he won a few victories against continental troops, he soon found that in the 'thin red line' he had more than met his match. Conclusions were tried upon the field of Waterloo, where 50,000 Britons put to flight 70,000 Frenchmen—for the Prussians, our allies, arrived too late for the battle. With a ringing British cheer our men charged down the slope and the enemy broke and fled. We now come on to the great Reform Bill of 1832, the first of those beneficent reforms which have made British liberty what it is and marked us off from the less fortunate nations.

Orwell continues: "Dorothy, who had never seen a history book of this description before, examined it with a feeling approaching horror."

SOCIAL STUDIES REVIEW

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ANY REACTION?

Do you know someone who would like a copy of the *Social Studies Review*? Do you have any comments or suggestions for feature articles and textbook reviews? Write us at the:

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SOCIAL STUDIES REVIEW

A PUBLICATION OF THE AMERICAN TEXTBOOK COUNCIL

Number 2 Fall 1989

As we go to press, the College Board reports that average scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test fell last year, adding to doubts that educational changes and spending increases are reviving school quality. After a decade of reform efforts we suspect improvement remains caught at the rhetorical level, debated in publications like the *Social Studies Review* but not made integral to the school curriculum. Yet a new generation of textbooks is appearing this year and next, and some welcome changes are possible. Companies including Houghton Mifflin and McGraw-Hill—now in joint venture with Macmillan—are responding to the new California curriculum in social studies. Because the textbook industry is in such flux and the stakes for leadership are so high, the Fall issue of the *Social Studies Review* includes a special article about consolidation in the business. What we find is that the emerging "Big Three" that publishers and educators are talking about may not be as alarming as many believe. In this issue, we also are excerpting some conclusions from Paul Gagnon's new study of eleventh grade American history textbooks. Gagnon's report sets out with clarity and eloquence the task ahead for improved instructional materials and curriculum reform in high school American history. In this issue we also begin commissioning our own textbook reviews, starting with the standard California history

INSIDE

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An important textbook review by Paul Gagnon for the American Federation of Teachers examines the five most commonly used American history textbooks. Here are some excerpts.

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A review of California's leading social studies textbook for fourth graders.

Page 5 ..... Ten Texts That Changed Our Lives

From *Common Sense* to *The Feminine Mystique*, books that shaped American history.

Page 6 ..... Textbook Consolidation: How Big a Menace?

With Macmillan's two aggressive moves this year, consolidation accelerates in the publishing industry. Educators talk about the emergence of a Big Three. The perceived threat of monopoly and foreign control may not be what it seems.

textbook for fourth graders. We will expand the number of reviews in future issues. We hope you will learn much from the articles and reviews, and we wish you a fine back-to-school season.

DEMOCRACY'S HALF-TOLD STORY: An Important Textbook Study

The Education for Democracy Project has tried to help schools and teachers strengthen their teaching of democratic values. The latest study to emerge from the project is Democracy's Half-Told Story: What American History Textbooks Should Add, *a survey of the five most commonly used high school textbooks, written by Paul Gagnon and published by the American Federation of Teachers. The 179-page study consists mainly of textual analysis by period and subject from the pre-Revolutionary era to contemporary America. What follow are some of Gagnon's observations:*

On Controversy. The texts are overloaded, unable to count upon any prior historical, cultural, or political literacy in readers, authors omit ideas and analyses, or pitch them to a low common denominator. To avoid offense to vocal interests, and to include sympathetic references to them, authors render their texts inconsistent, even schizophrenic, in dealing with controversial subjects—bland, evasive or pious on some, overly-critical on others. The same text that denounces past abuses and enslavement is likely to fall silent on current issues such as the "underclass." "Candid" and judgmental about the dead, it will be evasive about the living.

On Presentism. People and actions of the past are judged by today's fashions rather than by the circumstances and prevailing ideas of their time. Needless to say, this makes very bad history. It distorts reality, swapping truth and fairness for a temporary glow of moral superiority. Worse, it deprives students of perspective on themselves. By ignoring the reality of change from the past, it ignores as well the change that will surely continue after us, producing still different fashions of thought—by which we should not necessarily wish to be judged.

On Content. Textbooks would not need to be partisan in order to point out the danger of partisan skewing of public issues. Left and Right so often prefer to cry wolf, or conspiracy, when dull fact says otherwise. And it is not only in children's stories that when the facts justify alarm they are not heeded for having been so often abused. The quality of public debate is not helped by the Left's reluctance to find problems with Soviet power and dictatorships of the Left, with Third World debt, moral and cultural relativism, or the general secularization and levelling of society. It is not helped by the Right's reluctance to find problems with dictatorships of the Right, with secret government and covert violence, with environmental destruction, the arms race, corporate power, union-breaking, or extreme disparities of wealth. Nor is it helped by the failure of both extremes, each for its own reasons, to acknowledge the consequences, in foreign as well as domestic affairs, of a weak or divided federal government. If the Center is to hold, as the Founders held out in Philadelphia against the simple-minded of their day, we shall need—as Tocqueville said—an audience ready to listen to complications....

Were texts better organized along the lines of a few central themes, they would much more easily impress students with complication, drama, and suspense. The threads of immigration and cultural diversity, of economic change of our role in the world, and of democracy's range and quality, are not snipped off and neatly tied. They are unfinished business, inextricably wound around each other and around every public question we debate. On the theme of democracy, a useful ending—teachers could also furnish it themselves—would be a review of the basic principles and expectations of American democracy to serve as criteria by which students might measure our present condition and prospects. They could well apply the Founders' standards not only to government but to the power, the behavior and civic morality of private interest groups and corporations. And finally to themselves, to the demanding balance of their own rights and obligations as citizens. The sweep of American history will have taught them, we hope, that there are no islands—public, private or individual—entire of

themselves and nobody without responsibility for what happens next.

On Civic Education. Civic education asks people to accept the burdens of living with tentative answers and with unfinished and often dangerous business. It asks them to accept costs and compromises, to take on responsibilities as eagerly as they claim their rights, to honor the interests of others while pursuing their own, to respect the needs of future generations, and to speak the truth and to do the right thing, when lying and doing the wrong thing would be more profitable. Generally it asks them to restrain their appetites and expectations. Civic education asks all this, and that citizens inform themselves on the multiple problems and choices their elected servants confront.

It is easy to lay out these "values" and wholesome attitudes in classroom lessons, followed by quizzes and papers wherein the students repeat the phrases and swear devotion to them. And it is not so hard even to practice them on the playground and in the school, provided a certain level of morale exists. There is no trick to virtuous behavior when things are going well. Most people will hold right attitudes, without much formal instruction, when they feel themselves free, secure, and justly treated.

The tough part of civic education is to prepare people for bad times. The question is not whether they will remember the right phrases, but whether they will put them into practice when they feel wrongly treated, in fear for their freedom and security. Or when authorities and the well-placed, public or private, appear to flout every value and priority taught in school. The chances for democratic principles to surmount crises depend upon the number of citizens who know how free societies, their own and others, have responded to crises of the past, how they acted to defend themselves, and how they survived. Why did some societies fall and others stand? Citizens need to tell each other, before it is too late, what struggles had to be accepted, what sacrifices borne and comforts given up, to preserve freedom and justice.

It would be unreasonable to expect all students to thrill to history and civic education, any more than all thrill to geometry or physics. The deep, discriminating historical knowledge required to ward off panic, self-pity and resignation is not always fun to acquire. ★

Copies of *Democracy's Half-Told Story: What American History Textbooks Should Add* are available from the American Federation of Teachers, 555 New Jersey Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20001, for $7.00 per issue.

CALIFORNIA YESTERDAY AND TODAY

By Durlynn C. Anema, Ronald A. Banaszak, and Dennis C. Brennan. 320 pp. Morristown, N.J.: Silver Burdett Co.

By Gladwin Hill

This is what fourth graders might well call "a neat book." It is attractive, with lots of color and good art work—pictures, maps, graphs, charts—and an easy-reading text that touches on a lot of interesting matters.

From both pupil and teacher standpoints, this standard fourth grade history of the nation's most populous state is well structured. Fifteen chapters cover topics ranging from geography and history to state government, cities, and some basics of the economy. At the end of each chapter a review section presents "key facts," a vocabulary quiz, review questions, suggested supplementary exercises, and a "skills development" section oriented to creativity. Appendixes include a gazetteer, a glossary, maps and tables of state demographic and historical data.

All that a child or teacher could ask—right? Not quite. In fact, quite not quite. A close look at substance reveals some jarring deficiencies.

The authors—respectively, Director of Lifelong Learning, and Director and Associate Director of the Center for the Development of Economics Education, all at the University of the Pacific, Stockton, California—have steered clear of some standard pitfalls. The work in the main is refreshingly free of the

bald bowdlerizing, ostriching, and distortion that mark some texts cravenly crafted to survive the adoption gauntlet. Generally even-handed treatment of contentious matters is marred in only a few spots by the bleeding-heart syndrome.

The writers go for the loaded buzz-term "Native Americans" for Indians and even vouchsafe that California Indians are known as "Native Californians," although in some 40 years in the state I have never heard one so called. The brief Indian "occupation" of Alcatraz Island a few years back gets a 15-line overblowing of its intrinsic significance. Cesar Chavez gets two-thirds of a page that tends to depict him as the alpha and omega of the California labor saga, in which, seen in perspective, he is more a footnote.

But these are small matters. The big matter is that the book's title *California Yesterday and Today* is a decided misrepresentation. The authors have taken the easy way out and devoted the bulk of the book to safely embalmed history. Of 300 text pages, only 60 —20 percent—are focused on the period since World War II. This is rather appalling. It means that most of the book could have been written in 1945, considerably before current grade schoolers' parents were in the fourth grade. So much for "California today."

This obsolescence is epitomized in a page devoted to motion pictures. The only people mentioned are Sam Goldwyn, Jesse Lasky, Cecil B. DeMille, Al Jolson, and May McAvoy. This could have been written in 1935. Nothing about Los Angeles' multibillion-dollar film, television, and recording industries making it the entertainment capital of the world. I didn't find records mentioned, and television is nearly as slighted.

The book's lopsidedness as between past and present engenders some egregious incongruities. We are overdosed with the old soft-shoe about the Russians at Fort Bragg, the missions, and other threadbare historical vignettes, while the section grandiosely entitled "California and the Arts" is confined to four grotesque pages, one on the movies and one devoted to the sheet music of "California Here I Come." There are fleeting mentions of Caruso singing in San Francisco, Artie Mason Carter founding the Hollywood Bowl, and Arthur Putnam (who?) sculpting animals at the turn of the century. Writers are dismissed with mentions of Frank Norris, Jack London, and Mary Austin. Yet six lines are devoted to the "Mutt and Jeff" comic strip, with the cryptically gratuitous information that it was drawn by "a man named Bud Fisher." Whoever was responsible for the Arts section should give the money back.

Crammed into the short side of that four-to-one past-present ratio are stabs at dealing with California's post-World War II industrial boom, the Korea and Vietnam conflicts, population growth, the ethnic spectrum, water problems, state government, and cities, along with some data on California as "a leader among states."

Pressures for concision evidently led to some inordinately brusque treatments as well as some poor writing. Ticked off as principal state problems are air pollution, water resources, land use, energy, and "many of the same social problems that other states have." All these are treated in one-and-a-half pages—something less than 500 words. The largest slice of the section on state government is 200 words on the renovation of the state capitol.

The effort to talk to fourth graders in their own terms produces some toe-crinkling fatuities: "A natural boundary is a boundary that exists in nature"..."A revolt takes place when people rise up against their own leaders"..."A boycott takes place when people will have nothing to do with a particular group." And the understatement prize: "The gold rush brought hundreds of people to California." And surely it's a waste of fourth graders' time to tell them: "There is much airplane travel in California" . . . "Californians like to take part in sports...." We all commit such nothing sentences occasionally—in first drafts. But to professional writers they send the signal that the thought, if any, needs recasting.

Over all, *California Yesterday and Today* contains a lot of pith, adequately recorded, but the text badly needs rebalancing. Fourth graders certainly need to know about the origins of their state. But equally, they should

receive some elucidation and correlation of what they see and hear around them. *California Yesterday and Today* comes through as essentially an inventory—a smug diorama of static tableaux. Imaginative editing would devote no more than half of such a book to "Yesterday" and allot equal space to the present—to dynamic representation of the interplay of forces that make today's California quite different from the state it was even 30 years ago.

Granted it takes artfulness to knit together population, land use, industry, pollution, housing, poverty, crime, and the other converging currents of today. But if fourth graders are old enough to see homeless living on the edge, to be injured in freeway accidents or possibly hit by a street-gang bullet, to be barred from contaminated beaches or asked to assist in recycling, they are entitled to—and capable of understanding—some clues as to how all these things fit together. Inspired teachers may be able to use this rather misshapen text as a springboard toward a broader view of California. But they and their pupils deserve better. ★

Gladwin Hill was the Los Angeles bureau chief of *The New York Times* and is the author of *Dancing Bear*, a history of California politics.

TEN TEXTS THAT CHANGED OUR LIVES

By John Garraty

Common Sense (1776), by Thomas Paine. The pamphlet that, with its bold call for outright independence rather than reform of the British imperial system and with its harsh attack on both King George III, the "Royal Brute," and the very idea of monarchy, persuaded thousands to favor a complete break with Great Britain.

Uncle Tom's Cabin (1852), by Harriet Beecher Stowe. Whether or not Abraham Lincoln actually said to Stowe, "So this is the little woman who made this big war," this book had an enormous impact on how Northerners felt about slavery. It did so principally because of Stowe's ability to describe plantation slaves as individual people with deep feelings caught in an evil system without treating every white character in the story as an unmitigated villain.

The Influence of Sea Power upon History (1890), by Alfred Thayer Mahan. Captain Mahan argued that nations with powerful navies and the overseas bases to support them were victorious in war and prosperous in peacetime. The book had a wide influence among American military and political leaders.

Wealth against Commonwealth (1894), by Henry Demarest Lloyd. This powerful, if somewhat exaggerated, attack on the Standard Oil monopoly attracted wide attention. In addition to denouncing Standard's business practices—Lloyd said that the trust had done everything to the Pennsylvania legislature except refine it—he denounced laissez-faire economics and the application of Darwinian ideas about survival of the fittest to social affairs.

The School and Society (1899), by John Dewey. In this book the author developed the basic ideas of what was later to be known as "progressive" education. Schools should build character and train children to be good citizens, not merely provide them with new knowledge. They should make use of the child's curiosity, imagination, and past experience, not rely on discipline and rote memory to teach.

The Jungle (1906), by Upton Sinclair. Sinclair's story of the life of a Chicago stockyard worker described both the filthy conditions under which cattle were slaughtered and the ways in which the meat-packers exploited their workers. The novel was a best seller and led, partly because President Theodore Roosevelt reacted to it by setting in motion a government investigation, to federal meat inspection and the passage of the Pure Food and Drugs Act of 1906.

Sexual Behavior in the Human Male (1948), by Alfred C. Kinsey. This study, based on more than five thousand interviews with men of all ages, and a similar volume on women, published in 1953, demonstrated that people of all kinds engaged in a great variety of sexual practices. The books had an enormous

influence on public attitudes toward human sexuality.

The Other America (1962), by Michael Harrington. This book was a major force behind the so-called War on Poverty of the Lyndon Johnson era. Harrington called attention to what he called the "invisible land." Forty or fifty million souls, "somewhere between 20 and 25 percent of the American people," were living below the poverty line, he claimed. Most of them were crowded into inner-city slums, "invisible" to the middle class.

Silent Spring (1962), by Rachel Carson. By showing how pesticides such as DDT affected birds and other animals, and indirectly humans, too, *Silent Spring* caused a public furor that led to the banning of many such substances and to the modern attack on all forms of pollution.

The Feminine Mystique (1963), by Betty Friedan. If this work did not give birth to the modern feminist movement, it surely raised it to maturity. Friedan argued that most of the opinion-shaping forces of modern society were engaged in a witless effort to convince women of the virtues of domesticity. By so doing, they were wasting the talents of millions. Women should resist these pressures. "The only way for a woman . . . to know herself as a person," wrote Friedan, "is by creative work." ★

John Garraty is professor of history at Columbia University.

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TEXTBOOK CONSOLIDATION: HOW BIG A MENACE?

During the last few years consolidation within the textbook publishing industry has accelerated. Integrated communications empires with transnational aspirations have acquired formerly independent firms. As textbook companies become subsidiaries in megacorporations whose central activities are noneducational, complaints have arisen of restraint of trade, enforced product sameness, even a global publishing cartel.

Restructuring is at the heart of understanding dramatic changes in the nation's textbook market. But the octopus imagined by some educators does not exist. In 1988, the top ten textbook publishers controlled 70 percent of the market; the top three about one-third. Since Macmillan's aggressive joint venture with McGraw-Hill this summer, followed by its recent purchase of Merrill, these three have about a 45 percent share. As figures suggest, despite ongoing industry consolidation, textbook publishers hardly compete as automobile or tobacco firms do. Many small publishers, like McDougal, Littell in social studies, continue to hold lucrative niches.

Signals of niche-awareness on the part of publishers abound. That is to say, publishers who don't think that they can create a "best seller" are choosing not to compete in major markets, sometimes not even nationally. The elementary-level basal reading and social studies submissions in Texas have dropped in half since the early 1980s, according to one Scott, Foresman spokesman.

Scott, Foresman, of course, has been a unit of Time Inc. since 1986. This summer, newly named Paramount Communications (formerly Gulf + Western) attempted a hostile takeover of Time Inc. The bid failed, but it should give textbook observers some pause. Paramount owns Simon & Schuster (Silver Burdett & Ginn). In 1988 Paramount and Time Inc. were, respectively, the number two and number six el-hi publishers in the United States. If they had merged, the new company would have controlled almost 20 percent of the trade and would have held a virtual monopoly in some subjects.

The cover of Time Inc.'s 1988 annual report features this self-promotional statement: "By the mid-1990's, the media and entertainment industry will consist of a handful of vertically integrated, worldwide giants. Time Inc. will be one of them..." True to its word, Time merged with Warner Communications Inc. this July to form the largest communications and entertainment company in the world.

Simon & Schuster and Scott, Foresman remain separate. But a year ago, McGraw-Hill Inc. bought the assets of the college and school

divisions of Random House for about $200 million in cash. Macmillan and McGraw-Hill have formed a joint textbook company, with McGraw-Hill paying $190 million for the privilege. With the acquisition of Merrill for for $260 million, Macmillan/McGraw-Hill seems to have edged out Harcourt Brace Jovanovich as the nation's largest el-hi publisher, with estimated annual sales of $550 million. McGraw-Hill will no longer publish a basal social-studies series. With a new series issued this season, carrying a 1990 copyright, Macmillan is doing it for both of them. McGraw-Hill plans to focus on supplying supplementary materials for specific markets, notably the plummy California textbook market, now up for grabs.

Nearly everyone, including authors, benefits from the economies of scale that produce savings in areas like warehousing, printing, and paper. "For an author to say that he doesn't want to be published by a conglomerate is almost like a homeowner saying that he doesn't want his electricity provided by Con Edison," says one literary agent. Most important, consolidation allows publishers to integrate their title lines and sales forces, making them more efficient distributors.

A fundamental attraction of educational publishing is that established publishers generally do not have to worry about new companies entering the field. Forbidding barriers to market entry create a comfortable oligopolistic situation. Getting started is prohibitively expensive. Even big companies can falter. McGraw-Hill joined forces with Macmillan partly because its el-hi lines had grown stale and it was having trouble remaining competitive. Small companies cannot field big enough staffs to sell a product line effectively. Moreover, they are more likely to have cash-flow problems in what is a seasonal business.

Textbooks represent by far the most lucrative field in book publishing, with margins of between 10 and 20 percent. The total U.S. market for textbooks and other instructional materials exceeded $4 billion in 1988, of which almost $2 billion represented elementary and high school books. About $13 billion was spent on all books.

Textbooks comprise a nondiscretionary segment of the marketplace. Unlike trade books, which are sensitive to buyer whim and economic fluctuation, textbooks exist in mandated markets that provide predictable earning flows. A successful book or program can provide many years of revenues, and in capturing a large share of a market, ring up huge profits over time.

New technology poses no immediate threat. "Despite the growing use of computers, textbooks remain the foundation for as much as 90% of classroom learning," notes the current issue of the Paramount annual report. The long-term outlook for textbooks is bright. The much heralded "birth dearth" is over. The postwar generation's children are now going to school, and educational improvement is much on the mind of middle-class America. Budgets for instructional materials are increasing in response to bipartisan calls. On top of this, instructional materials continue to be a relatively small expenditure in U.S. schools and provide a relatively low-cost opportunity for curricular reform.

Children's trade sales are booming. Nearly a billion dollars will be spent this year on hardback books for children and more than $500 million on paperbacks, according to the Book Industry Study Group. That's up 115 percent for hardbacks and 156 percent for paperbacks compared with five years ago. By example, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich saw a 27 percent increase in children's book sales last year and is adding two new lines of books.

The textbook industry is in a highly volatile state. The frenzy of the last few years is not likely to abate. So let us consider in more detail current jockeying for power and profits:

What was the largest educational publisher, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, is running scared. In December 1986, HBJ bought Holt Rinehart & Winston from CBS Inc. for about half a billion. HBJ already owned Coronado, a California-based educational publisher. For 1988 its school sales and revenues were estimated at $477 million. Still, HBJ carries enormous debt, inspired first by its expansion and second by a hostile bid from Maxwell, the British communications giant that bought

Macmillan in 1988. Since then, the HBJ balance sheet has been bleeding, and the company has been vulnerable to takeover attempts.

Meanwhile, under the aggressive leadership of Richard Snyder, Simon & Schuster—the number two el-hi publisher before the Macmillan/McGraw-Hill venture—has been on a buying spree, and as a result, its revenues have surged. In 1985, what is now Paramount purchased Ginn & Co., mainly an elementary publisher, from Xerox for about $500 million. The next year, it acquired Silver Burdett Co. From these acquisitions, it created Silver Burdett & Ginn, dedicated to elementary school publishing, while leaving Prentice-Hall, purchased in 1984, to concentrate on the high school and college markets.

In November 1986, Time Inc. acquired Scott, Foresman & Co. for $520 million. Since then, textbooks have been profitable for Time, and the Scott, Foresman/Little Brown lines comprise a tenth of the corporation's estimated worth. An "18 percent rise in operating income was helped particularly by record revenues at Scott, Foresman," according to Time Inc.'s current annual report. While elementary school reading and mathematics remain Scott, Foresman's major course disciplines, its newly published social studies program captured almost half of the market in North Carolina, the report crowed. Because Scott, Foresman is a money maker, Time Warner may want to sell it off in the future.

In May 1986, with the aid of some of the company's top management, the Robert M. Bass Group led a buyout of Bell and Howell, then owner of Merrill. Bass also seemed to be moving on Houghton Mifflin, when it was announced in January 1989 that the Bass group held a 5.6% stake in the company. By late April it had cut its share to 1.1%. Houghton Mifflin is one of the last independent players in the textbook field. Last year, it earned $24 million on sales of $368 million, $234 million of which represents school revenues.

In 1988 Pearson, a British conglomerate that owns *The Financial Times*, outbid six other contestants in a private auction to buy Addison-Wesley for $283 million. The combined educational textbook subsidiary—Addison-Wesley-Longman—has worldwide sales of about $440 million.

The Pearson bid and British-owned Macmillan's textbook forays reflect the attractiveness of American publishing properties to investors from abroad. They are the first foreign publishers to make direct acquisitions of el-hi textbook lines in the United States. Some thought this could not happen, assuming that state education committees and local school boards would raise objections over foreign control of national curricula. None have to date.

Is consolidation dangerous? In 1890, five large houses, including A. S. Barnes, Appleton & Co., and Harper, combined their textbook lists to form the American Book Company, which controlled 75 to 80 percent of the market at the height of its influence. The new company gained a total monopoly in geography publishing, for example, producing no new books in that field for many years. But competition also increased. The American Book Company could not stop independents from bringing out more up-to-date, fresher textbooks more tailored to emerging curricula. Product quality and the changing tastes of teachers made a difference.

Up until now, the two largest publishers in the world, Bertelsmann (W. Germany) and Hachette (France), at least until the creation of the Time Warner colossus, have exhibited no interest in the U.S. textbook market. But the global reach of multinational companies and the relentless move toward an international framework of communication cannot be discounted.

The real problem seems not to be the threat of global monopoly. Instead it may be the subjugation of educational publishers to worldwide communication firms more interested in MTV and Nintendo games than in Thomas Jefferson or quadratic equations. The new textbook companies are profit driven as never before. But when educational publishing falls into the hands of individuals who cannot afford quality if it doesn't pay out, the curriculum may be at grave risk.★

—Peter Cannon and Gilbert T. Sewall

TOP TEN U.S. SCHOOL PUBLISHERS

(Estimated 1988 revenues, in millions)

1. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich	$476.5
2. Simon & Schuster (Paramount)	$341.0
3. Macmillan (Maxwell)*	$275.0
4. Scholastic	$252.1
5. Houghton Mifflin	$233.8
6. Scott, Foresman (Time)	$181.0
7. McGraw-Hill*	$165.0
8. D.C. Heath (Raytheon)	$110.0
9. Addison-Wesley (Pearson)	$85.9
10. Merrill*	$70.0

* In 1989 Macmillan initiated a joint venture with McGraw-Hill and acquired Merrill, making it number one in school sales.

SOURCE: IM Reports

BOOKS AND ARTICLES OF INTEREST

★ *Teaching International Politics in High School*, a new book edited by Raymond English, brings fourteen contributors including William Bennett and Jan Tucker to the subject. English warns in his foreword, "Many of our young people receive high school diplomas despite an appalling ignorance of the basic facts of geography, foreign affairs, and U.S. defense policies. Such ignorance endangers the future of our self-governing republic." The volume addresses the basic question: What should America's schools teach about international politics and ways to peace? Rejecting mushy conceptions of global education, the book includes some sterling examples of instructional materials on international politics for use in high schools, a fascinating appendix that indicates the kind of maps that textbooks should use, and a chronology of international events since 1945. Copies—$14.75 paper; $28.25 cloth—may be ordered from the Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1030 Fifteenth St., N.W., Suite 300, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 682-1200.

★ *Textbooks in the Third World: Policy, Content and Context*, by Philip G. Altbach and Gail P. Kelly ($38.00 hardbound, Garland, 1988), is not nearly as definitive as the title suggests. But this scholarly group of essays—with a few breathtaking exceptions—does avoid the cant and propaganda that too often mars discourse on Third World topics. Individual essays focus on government and international agency policies regarding the provision of texts and, in a second section, on the content of textbooks in countries including Nigeria, Malaysia, China, and Iran.

★ The National Governors' Association offers a handy booklet, *International Education: A Resource Guide*, listing more than forty organizations that promote the understanding of other countries and people and languages. The directory will aid teachers and other educators interested in developing courses in world politics, global studies, and history. For a copy write the National Governors' Association, 444 North Capitol St., Washington, DC 20001.

★ The June 1989 issue of *Educational Policy* is devoted to the topic "Textbooks in American Society." Contributors include Michael Apple on state control and "official knowledge" in textbooks, Bill Honig on the California Social Studies Framework, Harriet Tyson-Bernstein and Arthur Woodward on the role of textbooks in the current educational reform movement, and Arthur Rittenberg, who reflects on textbooks from the point of view of a publisher. Copies may be ordered from Butterworth Publications, 80 Montvale Ave., Stoneham, MA 02180; (617) 438-8464. Single issues are $6.25.

★ During the last year of his life the late Sidney Hook took up the issue of the proposed humanities curriculum scheduled to replace the Western Culture course at Stanford University this fall. In his last published article, appearing in the Spring 1989 issue of *Partisan Review*, Hook sets out an eloquent case against the curriculum. Hook notes: "If the new course carries out the sense of the motion as it was understood by its most enthusiastic adherents among the minority students and faculty, it will be, among other things, a comprehensive, diluted course in social studies dedicated to the appreciation of the contributions and systematic oppressions of racial minorities, women, and working masses in history, past and present, in all cultures studied, especially Western culture."

The question, Hook concludes, is "whether we are to develop informed men and women capable of continuing their own education, with open minds, free of zealotry, aware of the challenges to their own first principles and yet confident in the validity of their own reflective choices, prepared to defend the principles of a free and liberal civilization against enemies from any quarter, and with the imagination to see the human being even in the enemy." This article will interest any educator who worries about current obsessions with race, sex, and class in the humanities—and about innovations in required courses that have a distinctly partisan flavor.

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., made this elegant statement at Brown University last year, reprinted to a national audience this July in *The New York Times*:

> For better or for worse, we inherit an American experience, as America inherits a Western experience; and solid learning must begin with the absorption of our own origins and traditions. It thus sounds like an encomium to the old melting-pot, so be it. The bonds of cohesion in our society are sufficiently fragile, or so it seems to me, that we should not strain them by excessive worship at the shrines of ethnicity, bilingualism, global cultural base-touching, and the like. Let us take pride in our distinctive cultural inheritance as other countries take pride in their inheritance; and let us understand that no culture can hope to ingest other cultures all at once, certainly not before it ingests its own. In short, I believe in Western civilization.

It is reassuring to hear this credo coming from one of our nation's most distinguished historians, and one closely identified with liberal causes. It is unfortunate that the influential *Times*, in editing his remarks, cut the last sentence from the earlier Brown address.

★

ALSO NOTED

★ *The Civic Perspective*, a newsletter of the Institute on Writing, Reading and Civic Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, features articles that suggest innovative ways to help students develop civic identity or values. In one project, noted in the Spring 1989 issue, an English and social studies teacher in Los Alamos, New Mexico, have teamed up to prepare a writing skills handbook that uses quotations on civic virtue from some great philosophers and statesmen. For paragraph and sentence structure, they cite the likes of Lucretius, Hobbes, Tocqueville, Jefferson, and Brown v. Topeka, while under grammar and usage they quote such figures as Susan B. Anthony, Horace Mann, and Franklin Roosevelt. Those who want to be on the mailing list should write or call Sandra L. Stotsky, Editor, *The Civic Perspective*, 209 Larsen Hall, Appian Way, Cambridge, MA 02138; (617) 495-3521.

★ The Children's Book Council, a nonprofit association of children's book publishers, aims to promote the use of trade books in social studies. In conjunction with the National Council for the Social Studies, the CBC prepares an annual list of notable trade books in social studies aimed at children between five and thirteen. The books present many original themes and have a pleasing format. In 1988, almost one hundred books were selected, in fields such as American and World History, Folk Tales and Stories, Poetry and Songs, Biography and Autobiography. This eclectic list includes a number of titles that deal with such serious subjects as slavery, the Holocaust, and Vietnam. Kathryn Lasky's novel, *The Bone Wars*, for example, set in the late 1800s, pits gold seekers and bone-seeking archaeologists against American Indians in the prairies and badlands. Some readers saw this list in the April/May 1989 issue of *Social Education*. Single copies of the reprint are available from the Children's Book Council, 67 Irving Pl., P.O. Box 706, New York, NY 10276.

★ Unlike in Great Britain, economics has never been integral to the U.S. social studies curriculum. In spite of growing interest in the subject—the Advanced Placement is develop-

ing a new economics program—most economics is confined to such dreary quarters as "consumer education" or "marketing education." Since 1948 the Joint Council on Economic Education has worked to get economics into the curriculum and improve the quality of economic education.

Through teacher training programs and the development of curriculum materials, the Council helps educators at all levels gain a better understanding of basic economic concepts. Among other things, the Council produces an impressive list of high-quality textbooks and instructional materials. Students at all grade levels enrolled in the Council's Developmental Economic Education Program have scored significantly higher than their counterparts in other schools on nationally normed tests of economic understanding. Currently, 1,650 school districts participate in the program, which is said to have reached more than 800,000 teachers and 16.5 million students. For more information or a catalogue, write or call the Joint Council on Economic Education, 432 Park Ave. South, New York, NY 10016; (212) 685-5499.

★ Last May the New York City Board of Education, along with the Association of American Publishers and the Council of the Great City Schools, held a major textbook colloquium to examine American history materials and discuss the importance of promoting what are said to be bias-free instructional materials.

The main session focused on the depiction of minority groups and women. Howard Dodson of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, and coauthor of the new textbook study *Thinking and Rethinking U.S. History*, stressed that minority stereotypes do affect our students' self-image, social development, and view of the world. Although he acknowledged that textbooks now treat minorities and women more fairly than in the past, these groups still have far to go. "Biased texts are a very destructive influence," Dodson said. "We don't know much about the history of the U.S. because we don't know much about the American people." According to Dodson, educators should be aware of the multicultural, multiethnic makeup of our society. Bias-free education can enable students to gain "respect and appreciation for other cultures, a sensitivity to others, and a regard for human worth and dignity."

None of what Dodson says is objectionable, even though his complaint is slightly tired. Since the late 1960s—that is for twenty years—textbook publishers, educators, government officials, and other concerned citizens have acted to bring into focus the ethnic

FORTHCOMING STATE-LEVEL ADOPTIONS IN SOCIAL STUDIES

YEAR	STATE	GRADES OR SUBJECT
1990	Oklahoma	All
	Tennessee	All
	Arizona	K-8
	Texas	World History
1991	Arkansas	All
	Indiana	All
	Oregon	All
	Virginia	All
	West Virginia	All
	South Carolina	8-12
	California	K-8
1992	*Georgia*	All
	Louisiana	All
	New Mexico	All
	Florida	7-12
	Texas	U.S. History
1993	Alabama	All
	Idaho	All
	Kentucky	All
	Mississippi	All
	North Carolina	All
	Florida	K-6
	South Carolina	1-6
	Texas	7-12
1994	*Texas*	1-6

Italics denote one of the top 20 states in textbook sales.

The typical state adoption cycle runs four years, though it can be extended to six years. Utah adopts at the state level but reviews social studies textbooks on a rolling schedule.

groups, handicapped, women, and others neglected by historians in the past. Dodson has his own biases. From his perspective, the United States glistens with shame. In a Manichaean universe, a struggle goes on against racial, economic, and gender injustice; people of color fight against Eurocentrism; history is the story of Western civilization's despoliation of nature, native cultures, and just about everything else.

Thinking and Rethinking U.S. History, an analysis of textbook content developed by the Council on Interracial Books for Children and released at the conference, was underwritten by some major religious organizations including the National Council of Churches. The report professes to advance a bias-free revision of the nation's past in textbooks and thereby promote "social justice." It is hard to tell whether this claim is disingenuous or not. Like other reports, it does note the near-absence of religion as a textbook subject. But its methodology is risible and the involvement of historians is almost nonexistent. *Thinking and Rethinking U.S. History* bristles with righteous outrage. America's story begins and ends with "classism," militarism and imperialism, genocide, religious oppression, economic exploitation, and racial bigotry. It gives a depressing and distorted picture of the nation's past. More depressing, however, is that some of its important funders may take this polemical, partisan work to be authoritative and "balanced." Copies are available from the Council on Interracial Books for Children, 1841 Broadway, New York, NY 10023.

SOCIAL STUDIES REVIEW

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SOCIAL STUDIES REVIEW

A PUBLICATION OF THE AMERICAN TEXTBOOK COUNCIL

Number 3 Winter 1990

Entertainment magnate Norman Lear is the founder of the People for the American Way, an organization that has often seemed to worship zealously at the shrines of pluralism and secularism. So it is with some surprise—and satisfaction—we report that Lear, always attentive to trendy ideas in the popular culture, used the annual American Academy of Religion meeting, held in Anaheim, California, over the Thanksgiving holidays, as a forum to declaim on textbooks and the need for schools to "nurture spiritual imagination." Lear called on the theology professors and religious leaders to join forces with others trying to persuade publishers to end "an appalling neglect and misinformation about religion" in textbooks. His remarks point up an argument about schools today coming from diverse quarters. "Among secularists, the aversion toward discussing moral values—let alone religion—can reach absurd extremes," Lear asserted. Many others besides the television producer have come to the same conclusion: social studies textbooks are denying a basic element of the American and human past. Accordingly, in this issue we include a special section on religion. We are also expanding our review coverage in this issue, publishing two multiple reviews in important curricular areas. The first evaluates history texts used in lower-level American high school history classes. The second considers

Page 2 ..... Three Easy Readers

A review of three leading American history textbooks for less able high school students.

Page 4 ..... Magruder and Company: Three Leading American Government Texts

A review of the legendary *Magruder's American Government* and two other texts finds excessive coverage and more.

Page 6 ..... Religion in Textbooks: A Sensitive Subject Slighted

A special section including a survey of how Mormons are treated in history textbooks; also a review of an excellent new book in a neglected subject area.

Page 10 ..... Textbook Industry: An Update

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

three leading American government textbooks, including the fabled Magruder, which has dominated the field for generations. We think all these reviews and articles are timely and of great interest. We believe that you will agree.

THREE EASY READERS

By Martin Morse Wooster

We the People: A History of the United States, 2d ed. David B. Bidna, Morris S. Greenberg, and Jerome M. Spitz. D. C. Heath, 1982.
Life and Liberty: An American History. Philip Roden, Bruce Kraig, Robynn L. Greer, and Betty M. Bivins. Scott, Foresman, 1987.
Exploring American History, 2d ed. Melvin Schwartz and John J. O'Connor. Globe, 1986.

These three leading "easy readers" are geared to high school students who will never again study the subject. Easy readers are a special variety of history text. They are designed for high school students with low-level reading skills who nonetheless must take an American history course to qualify for a diploma. There are many such children, and even if they are not college bound, they deserve engaging textbooks. Such books should devote most of their space to the basic facts, not to frills or themes that should be pursued in more advanced courses.

Of the three titles, only *Exploring American History* accurately, if blandly, describes the development of the United States. Both *Life and Liberty* and *We the People* devote too many pages to nonessential frills such as slang glossaries and games that mislead or bore the reader. These books base their approach on the false and patronizing notion that students are unlikely to be interested in the subject. Often they frame the great debates of America in terms of the agonies of the average teenager. For example, in the section in *We the People* that deals with America's imperial expansion in the 1890s, the authors ask: "Have you ever felt that you wanted to make a place for yourself in a group of people and to be accepted and respected by them?"

The authors of *Life and Liberty* apparently assume that the growth of America is the historical equivalent of achieving puberty. In their section on the Revolutionary War, they offer a pallid story about a teenager wanting to move out of his parents' home: "In many ways, Chris was like the people who lived in the American colonies in the 1770's. . . . Unlike Chris, the colonists had to fight a war to gain independence."

After independence, the book continues, America still acted like a collection of teenagers in trouble: "America in the period from 1789 to 1815 might be compared to a class of students in their last year of school. Those students are at a crossroads in their life, almost independent but not quite."

Reading *Life and Liberty*, a critic may wonder if the authors will extend the analogy of America-as-teenager further. I wanted to see a chapter like "The United States in 1945: Grumpy Grandpa of the World Stage." This image of America as a person is, of course, ludicrous. Moreover, by condescending to their audience, the authors of these books do not achieve their goal. I have never known a sixteen-year-old who enjoyed being talked down to or babied. These efforts at "relevance" are likely to repel, not attract, readers. *Life and Liberty* is a calliope of "bells and whistles," full of so many diversions and gimmicks that the American story is lost, or worse, made to seem cute and contrived.

More perniciously, however, all three textbooks distort history. They omit significant facts at the same time they place a mistaken emphasis on the roles of women and minorities. The most misleading is *We the People*, whose authors present the story of America as a pageant of characters interspersed with snippets of narrative. Used in moderation, the introduction of biographies into a history primer is a good idea. America's story is, after all, something more than inexorable historical trends. In *We the People*, however, biographies occupy the majority of the text, which could have been better spent on providing basic facts. The life of the eighteenth-century American explorer John Ledyard gets two pages, for example, but Benedict Arnold is never mentioned. The eradication of the yellow-fever mosquito receives two pages. Both William McKinley and Grover Cleveland are absent

altogether.

If *We the People* views American history as a pageant, *Life and Liberty* presents the past as a carnival. Its authors offer the reader not only charts, maps, and other illustrations but a crossword puzzle, scrambled words, and even recipes. Some of these bell-and-whistle frills are illuminating, such as songs from the Civil War or a spelling exercise that asks the student to correct the notoriously fractured prose of Meriwether Lewis's journals. But does the low-achieving student truly need a mnemonic aid to help remember the names of the presidents that begins, "Wilma and Joan made Marvin and Jake / Very hot Tennessee pie"?

Life and Liberty, more than either of the other two books, reflects the current tendency to stress social and economic history over other forms of analysis. Much of this is fascinating, but much more is seriously misleading. For example, in their discussion of prices, the authors routinely forget to put prices in context. To say that women who worked in the Lowell, Massachusetts, cotton mills in the 1830s earned "$2.50 to $3.00 a week, from which $1.25 was deducted for living costs," is meaningless out of context. To students this information gives the impression of slave labor in what was a fairly enlightened early industrial setting. Without information about the prices of goods and services during this period, the student cannot know whether the Lowell factory worker's wages were high, low, or average.

Like many historians today, the authors of *Life and Liberty* overstate the importance of women and minorities in our nation's history, including many obscure figures who would not have been included if they were white males with the same accomplishments. I grant that textbooks treated women and minorities for years as little more than the stories of Molly Pitcher and Booker T. Washington. But to include women and minorities solely because of their race or gender is as noxious as to exclude them for the same reason.

Life and Liberty, for example, gives Abigail Adams a half-page biography. It mentions John Adams three times in passing, and ignores Henry Adams entirely. Another half-page in the text is devoted to the colorful but insignificant Mary Lease, the Populist Party's vice-presidential candidate in 1892. Why does *Life and Liberty* highlight Langston Hughes and ignore Robert Frost? Mary McLeod Bethune is called "an important adviser on black education and integration for President Franklin D. Roosevelt" when far more important Roosevelt aides such as Harold Ickes, Harry Hopkins, and Cordell Hull are left out. A more judicious auctorial team would have set guidelines such as "exclude all New Deal advisers and Brain Trusters," criteria that are not founded upon race and gender.

Exploring American History is the most straightforward, and hence most acceptable, of the three textbooks. It provides a sober and concise account of American military history, for example, while the others slight the topic. (*We the People* does not even mention the causes, battles, or consequences of the War of 1812.) *Life and Liberty* chooses the wars it analyzes in an arbitrary and capricious way. For example, the battle movements of armies in the Mexican War are given extensive treatment. Battles during the War of 1812, including the burning of Washington D.C., go unrecorded.

Exploring American History presents the stories it chooses to tell in a no-nonsense manner. In three pages the book accurately describes the Mexican War's causes and consequences, including such interesting facts as the Mexican army was five times the size of the victorious American forces. That is not to say that it meets the standards of fine historiography. It is bland, unappetizing, and often dull. It contains no passion; it could have been written by a team of Gradgrinds.

Ideally an easy reader should deliver the basic facts, as *Exploring American History* does, and supplement them with a few of the attention-getters that *Life and Liberty* overuses. Such a book would be written by an individual, not developed by committee. A well-written and accurate text would do far more to interest less able students than any number of scope and sequence charts and readability formulas. But the peculiarities of the textbook industry make this improbable in the foreseeable future.

Formerly an editor at *Harper's* magazine and the *Wilson Quarterly*, Martin Morse Wooster is the Washington editor of *Reason*.

MAGRUDER AND COMPANY: Three Leading American Government Texts

By Charles T. Rubin

Magruder's American Government. Revised by William A. McClenaghan. Prentice Hall, 1990.

Government in the United States. Richard C. Remy, Larry Elowitz, and William Berlin. Scribner Macmillan, 1987.

American Government: Principles and Practices. Mary Jane Turner, Kenneth Switzer, and Charlotte Redden. Merrill, 1987.

Several years of teaching introductory courses in American government to college students led me to believe that this subject was not taught in high schools any more. It was thus a great surprise to find that of the 26 students I have in an American government class, 15 had taken the subject in high school, and several thought they had used the book called Magruder, which has been in print for 71 years, sells some 100,000 copies a year, and remains one of the most successful textbooks ever written.

These three books contain, and present clearly, information about just those basics of American government that I would hope students come to college knowing. Having read these books, students could know something about the Constitution, the structure and functions of the government, and various public policy issues. They could be familiar with the meaning of terms such as checks and balances, federalism, separation of powers, interest groups, public opinion.

So why don't my students know the basics of American government? Surely some responsibility rests with these texts. While these books contain much of the raw information students should have, they do not seem to present it in a way likely to produce the understanding of that information that is necessary for retention. There are two related reasons for this failing. First, these books cover too much ground. Second, too often the material that is discussed is presented without an overarching perspective that would allow students to place diverse facts in a context.

Magruder is aware that the first charge can be made; the present author answers it by saying that if the book "is a 'large' one, it is because its subject matter is a very large and a very important one." This is not an adequate defense. Important things can be short and concise. The subject matter is large, but that does not mean that texts such as these have to attempt to exhaust it. In fact, trying to do so means failing to make distinctions about what is more or less important for students to be learning at this stage of their education.

It is easy to point out that the volume of information contained in all these books is inflated considerably by the pictoral material presented in maps, graphs, charts, and photographs. While reasonable people can disagree about the extent such visual aids are central to learning, surely all can agree that such material should support and supplement the text in serious ways. Often they do not. What, in Turner's chapter on state executive and judicial branches, does a picture of campaign signs in front of a bus on a rainy road add to the discussion of elected state officials? What do pictures of a shoplifting warning and a state trooper getting into a car add to a discussion of a state judicial system?

Other uses of visual material seem less frivolous, but no more educationally helpful. Magruder's chapter on the Congress has seven pictures. Three of these pictures portray members of Congress; two of them are women and one a black male. Meanwhile, the text informs us that "the 'average' member is a white male in his late 40s."

This pictoral material is there to present information in a way more likely to appeal to and stick with students increasingly raised on visual images. But if it is employed tendentiously, how can even this supposed benefit be achieved? Instead, confusion is produced by meaningless or mixed messages.

The textual material is excessive and overinclusive. Including material of doubtful relevance, Remy and Magruder both have a chapter on comparative government. This topic is worthy enough in its own right, but American government courses should not bear the burden of international education, however necessary or fashionable. Or again, Magruder spends four pages on the United Nations,

Turner seven. It should be noted that both cover the Constitutional Convention in seven pages—less than a chapter.

When we talk about how the subject is presented, we move to the second major problem of these books. As an example, take their presentations of the meaning of the First Amendment, to which all devote a chapter. Here we have a topic that is, and deserves to be, covered at length. The coverage turns out to be little more than a listing of the bare findings of various Supreme Court cases. In Magruder, an encyclopedic approach results in a monotonic list. Little or nothing is presented in the way of Constitutional interpretation. Turner discusses freedom of religion and speech without a single dissenting opinion being noted in the text; a chart presents a summary of the various opinions in a single case. Magruder presents scores of cases on religion and free speech issues alone, noting dissent in only two cases, and those are direct quotes from Holmes's idiosyncratic if stirring dissents on free speech issues. Remy, least guilty of the laundry list approach, is the only one to acknowledge—twice, in a sentence each—what more prosaic dissenters on the Court have had to say.

Such an approach is wrong for two reasons. First, because it is a laundry list. What are students supposed to retain from such discussions? The findings of particular cases? The doctrinal shifts over time? Or a sense that the Court makes it up as it goes along? Second, the laundry list's apparent simplicity—the Court found this, the Court found that—is misleading. Specific Court outcomes come and go; what remains is a debate on the Court that is part of an ongoing debate about American values as they are defined by the Constitution. Such debates are one of the most important and exciting aspects of American government. All these books purport to provide discussion topics or materials for students, yet here (and elsewhere) they deny students the opportunity of seeing what serious debate looks like by passing over controversy. If students don't understand that, they will not understand the Court or the nature of the principles that inform our regime.

The lack of recognition of Court debate is exacerbated by the misleading or confusing context in which the discussion of the rights in question is placed. For example, when discussing freedom of religion, all the texts quote Jefferson about "a wall of separation between church and state." Never mind that Jefferson was not a drafter of the amendment, and is not necessarily its most authoritative interpreter. Only Magruder acknowledges explicitly that the phrase may be less than accurate as an account of what the amendment means or what the Supreme Court has decided it means; for the others it is allowed to stand as a suitable summation of what follows.

Or again, take the general discussions of civil rights that in Turner and Magruder open these chapters. For Turner, the weakest of the texts, civil rights are "privileges granted to individuals by constitutions or statutes" while civil liberties are "freedoms that individuals possess that government may not infringe upon." Despite the fact that this understanding makes rights merely a matter of what the law says at a given moment, which would have come as some surprise to the Founders or Martin Luther King, Jr., civil rights are generally "more absolute than civil liberties." Forgiving the grammatical absurdity, we ask why are they more absolute? Because the government has to support a legitimate right, while it may only restrict a liberty when it can "prove it is in the public interest to do so." Can anyone, let alone a high school student, make sense of this muddle?

Magruder's opening discussion, on the other hand, properly notes that rights are connected to limited government, and directs the reader back to an earlier historical treatment of how these ideas developed in England and the Colonies. So far, so good. Perhaps only the brighter students, in the face of the mass of confusing case law that follows, will recall in this context something they learned in chapter one. If in attempting to understand rights they trace them from the Constitution to the Declaration of Independence and thence to social contract thinkers such as Locke, Magruder's judgment that social contract theory "seems farfetched to many of us today" may give them pause as to what all this fuss about rights is based on.

It is just such contextual and conceptual shallowness that undermines these books'

ability to reach their readers. Alexander Hamilton argued that at stake in the adoption of the Constitution was whether good government could be established on "reflection and choice" or whether regimes could only arise from "accident and force." We might well gather from these books that accident does rule, generally happy accident, but accident none the less. These books make necessary bows to the ideas that animate the American regime. But their real work is telling students about the Bureau of Land Management and other minutia of government activity at all levels. Sometimes there are needless forays into tangential subject matter such as Soviet agriculture or state-based efforts at economic development. We have the nuts and bolts of American democracy in these books, and for that they deserve some praise. But the nuts and bolts are merely filed more or less neatly in their hardware store bins; they don't hold a structure together.

Charles T. Rubin is an assistant professor of political science at Duquesne University.

RELIGION IN TEXTBOOKS: A Sensitive Subject Slighted

The story of religion—so basic an influence in shaping the ideas and events of the American nation—shrunk to nearly nothing in school-level history textbooks during the 1980s. Too bad, since this turn of events evaded, denied, and underestimated a compelling force in the American and human past. In the last few years, the resulting distortions in the social studies curriculum have become evident. How to correct them remains uncertain.

The search of English Puritans, Roman Catholics, and other Dissenters for congenial surroundings was fundamental to the establishment and growth of the American colonies. The Bill of Rights limited religion as it acknowledged its centrality in civic life. Religious will shaped the thinking and actions of social reformers from Horace Mann and Harriet Tubman to William Jennings Bryan.

Without understanding of the meaning of Providence, how can we understand "manifest destiny" in nineteenth-century western settlement or twentieth-century diplomacy? For that matter, how can we understand what Rhode Island is? John Adams was a Congregationalist, and John D. Rockefeller, a Baptist. John Kennedy was a Catholic. The nation still overwhelmingly conforms to religious sentiment and sacred will. Presidents are sworn in with their hands on the Bible, the state supports chaplains in the armed forces, churches and temples exist in a privileged fiscal condition, virtually exempt from taxes and government regulation.

In 1980, New York University professor Paul Vitz first called attention to textbooks' denial of religion in a seminal study that gained some notoriety when critics charged that the report, funded by the National Institute of Education, constituted federal advocacy of religion in education. The study found vast neglect of the role of religion in American history during the last century. According to Vitz, today's textbooks exhibit a "deep seated fear of any form of active contemporary Christianity, especially serious, committed Protestantism," except in picturesque and quaint design, as with the Amish in Pennsylvania.

Vitz's complaint has been echoed by a wide ideological spectrum of prominent education groups. Studies by the People for the American Way and Americans United for Separation of Church and State have both asserted religion has been ignored in textbooks, even though until recently their prescriptions have rested exclusively in the celebration of religious liberty and tolerance.

Last year, textbooks reports as different as the Council for Interracial Books' *Thinking and Rethinking U.S. History*—which takes Protestantism and Roman Catholicism mainly to be sources of past iniquity and future instruments of what it calls "social justice"—and the American Federation of Teachers' *Democracy's Half-Told Story*—which takes religion to be a fundamental and constructive impulse in human culture—noted opaque textbook treatments of religion.

Such findings should not surprise. Among many educated Americans, the conventional view of traditional religion ranges from

embarrassed amusement to hostile contempt. Presentists can bask happily in what Paul Gagnon has called the "temporary glow of moral superiority," since religious establishments in America and throughout the world since earliest times have sanctioned what modern sensibilities might view as disagreeable, sometimes horrible institutions. Arthur B. Schlesinger recently denounced organized religion's record in *The New York Times*, not only for its "acquiescence in poverty, inequality, exploitation, and oppression, but for enthusiastic justifications of slavery, persecution, torture, genocide, and the abandonment of infants."

Since the 1960s the nation's prevailing Judeo-Christian belief system has come under fierce attack. Traditional religion has been subjected to skeptical reexamination from a variety of sources, while what are generously called "alternative religions" have gained new adherents and media attention. Many religious leaders have tilted toward new forms of political stewardship. Meanwhile, aggressive fundamentalists have burst onto the scene, brimming with chiliastic visions, eager to turn schools into agencies of Christian advocacy.

So what are textbook makers going to do? Publishers realized well back that they were dealing with an explosive subject. Better to delete or dilute such subject matter so as to appeal to diverse customers of radically different spiritual inclinations, or sometimes no inclinations at all.

An American Textbook Council inspection of major textbooks confirms the charges. The subject of religion is attenuated. In fifth grade books, after cursory notice as a motive of seventeenth-century settlement, the subject disappears entirely. In secondary-level texts religion is reappearing, as publishers respond to critics of this evasiveness. But even now the sacred is surveyed almost exclusively using the litmus of religious freedom. As the nation's history moves toward the twentieth century, religion sometimes evolves into a fatuous version of the human potential movement or a lurid sideshow in the popular culture. *The Glorious Republic* (Houghton Mifflin, 1990), a high school text, takes another cheap way out, presenting contemporary religion with an old-chestnut quotation from Tocqueville and five uncaptioned, "representative" photographs.

The struggle for religious liberty (indeed liberation from established orthodoxies) strikes the dominant chord in current textbooks. Once this point is made, customarily with the earliest settlements and the Bill of Rights, the texts move on, perhaps to make the point again, say, with the migration of the Mormons during the 1840s. What is not well explained in social studies textbooks is the age-old place of religion in moral and civic life, and in the case of American history, how Judeo-Christian belief has entered into the national calculus. What religion is—and the passions it invokes—remains cryptic.

The American Tradition (Merrill, 1986) does a better job with the subject than most secondary-level texts. It highlights the issue of freedom from the arrival of the Puritans through the First Amendment to the Supreme Court school prayer ruling of 1962, and does so admirably. The same text features the Hare Krishnas, the Reverend Moon, Jim Jones, and Oral Roberts as examples of contemporary religious phenomena, casting an odd shadow over the subject. Indeed the subtext of the lesson is the "dangers of brainwashing."

But the book also acknowledges the strains between traditional and modern religion, the decline of mainline Protestant churches, and increased fundamentalist enthusiasm. A few books, including *Land of Promise* (Scott, Foresman, 1987), have ingested enough social history to notice the link between religion and abolitionism, for example. On the other hand, no major text adequately connects religion and the civil rights movement of the 1960s or recognizes its influence on black leaders from Martin Luther King to Malcolm X.

World history textbooks often have an easier time with religion than American history texts. Such texts by their very nature must consider several different systems of belief, appealing to social studies educators' enthusiasms for diversity, pluralism, and equal time to all points of view. World history also illustrates profound differences among religions. This is far harder to do in the case of America, overwhelmingly Christian in its history and even now an intensely theistic nation, bound culturally by the moral commandments that shaped Mosaic Law and Scripture. —Gilbert T. Sewall

PATHWAYS TO PLURALISM: Religious Issues in American Culture. Robert A. Spivey, Edwin S. Gaustad, and Rodney F. Allen. Addison-Wesley, 1990.

By Harriet Tyson

A growing consensus has developed that textbooks fail to acknowledge the role of religion in American history. Now leading educators and educational organizations are urging the schools to teach much more about religion than they currently do and reassuring teachers that teaching *about* religion as opposed to *teaching* religion is not only permissible under the Constitution but affirmatively encouraged in several Supreme Court decisions.

Textbook publishers remain reluctant to publish books that could aggravate the sensitivities of religious minorities and spark sectarian battles over textbook adoptions. Adding material about religion to standard history texts runs the risk of superficial, mechanical treatment and even more overstuffed books.

Now, for teachers and others who have had difficulty finding materials strong enough to protect them from their own discomforts and knowledge gaps, comes *Pathways to Pluralism*, a slender paperback supplementary text intended for high school students, and an accompanying teacher's guide. The instructional materials are so eminently sensible, balanced, and interesting that they make one wonder what all the fuss is about.

Much of the information in *Pathways to Pluralism* is conveyed through original sources. A deliciously cunning letter from Sir Humphery Gilbert to Queen Elizabeth in 1577 asks for money in the name of Christian policy to do in the shipping fleets of France, Spain, and Portugal. A letter from the Reverend Richard Hakluyt the Younger, a pious man, asks Queen Elizabeth to fund an expedition to convert the idolators ("worshipping the sun, the moon, and the stars") on the North American continent before the Catholics steal them away.

The book quotes William Penn on religious liberty and contains a stirring letter from major General David S. Stanley, U.S. Army, praising Father De Smet, S.J., for making peace between the Indians and the U.S. government—an effort that succeeded for a time because of De Smet's extraordinary devotion to the truth and willingness to risk his own life. A 1922 letter from Harry Emerson Fosdick to William Jennings Bryan attacks creationism on biblical rather than scientific grounds.

Lyrics to the great spirituals put the readers inside the religious experience of the early black church, and accounts of conversion experiences let the reader glimpse fervent white Protestantism. The book contains eloquent letters from Catholic and Jewish leaders affirming religious liberty in the face of nativist marauders. A letter from a Salvation Army volunteer in a Paraguayan leper colony makes the social gospel more than an abstraction, and a discussion of Hasidism gives another view of the unity of faith and work.

All of the dilemmas treated in this book are crucial to an understanding of the American past, and all of them are still dilemmas today: conformity versus diversity, tax subsidy verses strict separation, personal religion versus the social expression of religious values, conscience versus the Constitution, science versus biblical truth, and the question of whether America is Protestant or pluralist. These contentious issues are tamed by the book's gentle tone and by its scrupulous attention to all the actors in the American scene.

High school teachers who want their students to understand the role of religion in American culture will find *Pathways to Pluralism* a welcome addition to their collection of teaching materials. Because the book treats issues that touch all of us deeply, whether we are religious or not, high school students—natural philosophers that they are—should find the book a blessed relief from the dry history texts we usually ask them to read.

THE MORMONS: Saints or Sinners?

Of the Christian religions native to America, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, popularly known as Mormons, has been the most successful. Over the years divine revelations have prompted its leaders to discard those tenets of their faith that have offended mainstream morality. One notorious practice, of course, was polygamy, renounced by the church a hundred years ago, although multiple wives still are said to preside over a few households in the outlands of Utah, Idaho, and Wyoming. In Mormon territory, the wall of separation between church and state remains thin at the local level.

Today we tend to forget the passions that this once radical sect aroused in the last century as it sought to establish a New Israel on the American continent. Since the Mormons played such a prominent role in the opening of the west, students sooner or later should learn something about their past. The story is rich and complicated, and one that could give teachers and students the chance to examine disturbing conflicts over religious belief.

Elementary-level texts tend to treat the Mormon experience merely as a lesson in religious freedom, like that of the Pilgrims. Typical is this arid passage in a 1988 Scott, Foresman fifth grade history: "Another group from the Northeast, the Mormons came to the West looking for freedom to practice their religion. They settled in nothern Utah and founded Salt Lake City. They learned to use the land by building dams and canals for irrigation. Today over three fourths of the people of Utah are Mormons."

A New York history in the same program dispatches the Mormons in a bizarre paragraph: "In 1830 in a small town near Elmira, a man named Joseph Smith began a new Christian religion—the Mormon faith. Smith believed that God had directed him to start the new religion. Later, the Mormons moved to Utah."

At the eighth grade level, treatments vary. Jacobs et al.'s *America's Story* (Houghton Mifflin, 1988), for example, tucks the Mormons under the heading "Farming in the West," which states: "The Mormon settlers in Utah also practiced irrigation." Here as elsewhere the stress is on the secular virtues of these hard-working pioneers who made the desert bloom.

Polygamy is a topic too hot even for some eighth grade texts, even though the subject has surefire appeal to thirteen-year-olds. Ver Steeg's *The American Spirit* (Ginn, 1985) says vacuously: "The church was founded in western New York in 1830 by Joseph Smith. Smith led his followers to Ohio, to Missouri, and finally to Illinois. By 1844 the Mormons had the largest and richest settlement in the state. Others envied them. The Mormons sometimes disagreed among themselves about religious questions. But they banded together when Smith was killed by a mob of non-Mormons."

In contrast, Garraty's *American History* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986) does not shirk the polygamy issue: "The Mormons adopted religious practices that tended to set them apart. One was polygamy, which permitted a man more than one wife at the same time. Smith also became quite domineering as the church grew. He organized a private army, the Nauvoo Legion. He refused to allow critics of his group to publish a newspaper in Nauvoo. By 1844 opposition to the Mormons in Illinois led to Smith's arrest. Then a mob formed. He was dragged from jail and lynched."

If this text casts Smith in a bad light, it praises the church's new leader, Brigham Young, as "devoutly religious, handsome, and tremendously strong," as well as "an excellent organizer." The text also points out that the "Mormons' success was possible because Brigham Young had almost total control over the community." This book is exceptional compared to other leading eighth grade texts in presenting a balanced picture of the Mormons that dares to be thought provoking.

Most high school texts discuss polygamy frankly, but a few avoid the subject. Failing to explain that Joseph Smith was murdered because he had proclaimed himself a kind of Solomon entitled to a harem can lead to a skewed view of the Mormons' persecution, as in Boorstin and Kelley's *A History of the United States* (Ginn, 1986): "The Mormons were remarkably successful. With their new American religion they looked to the West for their promised land. They set up instant cities of their own in Missouri and Illinois. When

the Mormons prospered, however, their envious neighbors believed all kinds of strange stories about them and persecuted them. In late June 1844 the founder of their religion and their leader Joseph Smith as well as his brother Hyrum were killed by an Illinois mob that feared and hated these distinctive people. The Mormons had to move on." Such evasive treatment suggests that Ginn, by no means the sole miscreant among publishers, has bent over backwards not to offend and possibly to flatter.

Like Ver Steeg, Boorstin and Kelley slot the Mormons in westward expansion. Others place them firmly in a religious context. Berkin and Woods's *Land of Promise* (Scott, Foresman, 1987), for example, examines the Mormons in a chapter that also covers anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic sentiment, utopian societies, and Transcendentalism.

The discussion of the Mormons in Bailey's *American Pageant* (D.C. Heath, 1987) follows sections on religious revival and denominational diversity. A box states that "Polygamy was an issue of such consequence that it was bracketed with slavery in the Republican national platform of 1856." The main text mentions the Mormons' near-confrontation with a federal army in 1857, their flourishing missionary movement in Europe, and the delay of Utah statehood until 1896 on account of "their unique marital customs."

In this century the Mormons found a place within a pluralistic nation and developed into one of the fastest-growing religions in the world. No textbook addresses the racism of the original church, which recruited primarily in Britain and taught that blacks were descendants of Cain. Only recently did a decree permit black men to become full members of the church, at last eligible along with their families to join the elect in heaven. On the other hand, Utah was among the first states to grant women suffrage. And if militant feminism has yet to enter the Mormon home, where the woman as wife and mother remains subservient to her husband, Mormons believe in honorable values of sobriety, hard work, thrift, community, and patriotism. Not only is theirs a complex history that resists easy moralizing. It forms a fascinating story that can inspire plenty of lively narrative and student debate. —Peter Cannon

TEXTBOOK INDUSTRY UPDATE

What was a tumultuous decade in the textbook publishing industry drew to a close with a traumatic quarter marked by more restructuring, troubled bottom lines, and apparent confusion about the future.

After months of rumors, the newly created Time Warner communications empire sold its Scott, Foresman division to Harper & Row for $455 million in late November. That was considerably less than last summer's advertised estimates of the asset. Time Inc. had bought Scott, Foresman in 1986 for $520 million; Time Warner then seems to have sold at a loss. Harper & Row is owned by Rupert Murdoch, the Australian newspaperman, not a sentimentalist about his properties.

The Scott, Foresman sale suggests that in spite of heralded demographics and interest in educational quality, textbook companies are not the hot properties they were. Some of their new owners are clearly having difficulty digesting them. Paramount, the owner of Simon & Schuster, took a huge $140 million writeoff against the earnings of its publishing operations, citing sharp increases in textbook development and marketing costs. Michael S. Hope, a Paramount executive vice president, said that the "cost pressures are from the increasingly competitive environment because of industry consolidation." He added: "People are putting more money into their products to ensure that they get into the marketplace."

In November, McGraw-Hill pulled out of the dynamic California social studies market, abruptly and without apologies, much to the dismay of some educators who were impressed with its editorial direction. Fundamentally a college and vocational publisher in textbooks, McGraw-Hill is now in league with Macmillan. Macmillan—its new social studies program carrying a 1990 copyright—apparently wants to keep the lucrative California market for itself. The Macmillan K-7 program in places conforms, albeit crudely, to the new history-centered mandates of the state curriculum. McGraw-Hill is losing money this year and took a $220 million writeoff in December. In the current industry climate, publishers do not want their own books competing against one another.

Houghton Mifflin has also committed itself to California. It has the rights from Ligature, a major textbook production company, to publish a 1990 social studies program. The publisher promises to advance narrative and historical content in these new instructional materials, and Houghton Mifflin is known for its relatively high-quality products. Still, can Houghton Mifflin do it? In late 1989 its stock prices hit lows after earnings fell far short of forecasts and takeover rumors cooled. The decreased earnings were attributed to high costs in textbooks: Houghton Mifflin's highly regarded literature-based elementary-level textbooks—again, spurred by California's leadership—have been costly. They have resulted in declining textbook sales and profits.

Harcourt Brace Jovanovich? HBJ continues to pay the price for the highly leveraged Holt Rinehart acquisition and a hostile takeover attempt from Robert Maxwell, who was later to purchase Macmillan. In fact, it is losing money and selling off assets at discount prices. In el-hi textbook publishing it recently relinquished its number-one spot to Macmillan. Moreover, the troubled company can ill afford to freshen its products with new investments and R&D. Like Houghton Mifflin's, HBJ's market value has recently taken a plunge. The value of its properties seems to have been overestimated, and the company is not meeting projections for debt retirement. Takeover rumors continue.

NOTED WITH INTEREST

★ In New York state, a heralded report of the Task Force on Minorities appeared earlier this year, calling for "a curriculum of inclusion." Like many earlier studies, it claims that textbooks fail to take into account racial, economic, and gender injustices in American society. The song remains the same: European culture, dominated by white males of property, is ritually condemned. America is a congeries of bigots and victims. The report also asserts that schools drain minority children of self-esteem and contribute to feelings of superiority among whites. Presented to the New York State Board of Regents, the executive summary begins: "African Americans, Asian Americans, Puerto Ricans/Latinos, and Native Americans have all been the victims of an intellectual and educational oppression that has characterized the culture and institutions of the United States and the European American world for centuries."

These statements and sentiments are offensive, not only because of their absence of truth, but also because of their source. Remember that the report originates not from some silly advocacy group but comes under the signature of New York commissioner of education Thomas Sobol. The report calls for multicultural education—the catch phrase of the moment that encompasses a range of revisionist, generally Europhobic social studies views—not just in the humanities but in such subjects as science, mathematics, physical education, and the treatment of animals.

As author Midge Decter has noted, the report is profoundly racist in assuming that ghetto children must be given a special brand of education—and dangerous in ignoring the importance of order, discipline, decorum, and even drill in effective learning. We are not "doing minority kids a favor by impressing on them that the language and culture of the country in which they live is not theirs and, what is worse, need not be theirs," Decter wrote in the November issue of *Contentions*.

A Curriculum of Inclusion is an angry, ignorant, polemical document, all this, but mainly it is irresponsible. In one loony charge, the report asserts that "the stereotyping of African peoples and African Americans through the 'Tarzan syndrome' and the 'Amos and Andy syndrome' has a parallel for Asian Americans through 'Charlie Chan,' for Latinos through 'Frito Bandito,' and for Native Americans through 'The Lone Ranger and Tonto.'" Where have Sobol and company *been* for the last, oh say, twenty or thirty years?

★ *Historical Literacy* is a new book subtitled "The Case for History in American Education," edited by Paul Gagnon and the Bradley Commission on History in Schools, and published by Macmillan. It argues eloquently that history gives necessary context to all the humanities and social sciences and helps children understand their place in the long sweep of history. Essays in the multiauthor volume examine the origins of today's problems from the pseudo-reform of the 1960s

to the antihistorical influence of television. The book describes mediocre and ideal curricula, and Charlotte Crabtree calls for "a curriculum that returns to classrooms the pleasures of stories worth telling." Other excellent essays are authored by the notable historians Gordon Craig, Kenneth Jackson, Diane Ravitch, and Michael Kammen.

★ From Tiananmen Square to the Brandenburg Gate, the dreary failure of totalitarian government is evident. Democracy is not just a Western ideal. You wouldn't always know this from textbooks. In the Fall 1989 issue of *American Educator* there appears a sobering review of the ways in which textbooks turn a tolerant or blind eye to abuses in totalitarian countries. "China's Untold Story," by André Ryerson, reviews 23 leading instructional packages. In an effort not to pass judgment on foreign cultures, Ryerson found, social studies texts gloss over the evils of the Communist regime that has ruled China since 1949: "The disturbing truth is that most American educational materials on China, with remarkable consistency, avoid those questions that pertain to issues of democratic values and human rights." The word "totalitarian" rarely appears since it might provoke "negative stereotypes...against which teachers and students are constantly warned," he concludes. Many texts fail to convey that millions suffered and died during the lunacies of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, or that the Chinese government strictly controls the lives of ordinary citizens. Some husbands and wives, for example, are forced to live and work in cities hundreds of miles apart. Instead, leading texts generally give the wishful impression that the Chinese live in a world essentially the same as our own.

★ Children's books do a thriving business. But how many of them tell good stories, asks John R. Dunlap in the December 1989 issue of *The American Spectator*. A professor of English at Santa Clara University, Dunlap surveys the prestigious and big-selling Newbery award-winners. "The fantasy. . .is written not to instruct you or to enlarge your understanding, but to keep you sitting on the edge of your chair," Dunlap writes. "The problem book, absorbed with such troubles [as murder, poverty, child abuse, and abandonment] and with the consequent emotional distress, evinces a crimped imagination which sees the 'real world' as an impoverished little place circumscribed by news copy and psychology texts." The adventure story like *Treasure Island* is not in fashion. Since 1960, Dunlap contends, problem books have become dominant in the juvenile field. Dunlap reviews the trendy books that win prizes today. Not only are they devoid of humor. They convey a didactic, often pious tone—which Dunlap's own twelve-year-old son characterizes as "boring and kind of preachy." Moreover, Dunlap asserts, trendy treatments of divorce, homosexuality, sexual promiscuity, rights, and relativism in children's books may be "telling a lot of big fibs to our kids."

SOCIAL STUDIES REVIEW

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SOCIAL STUDIES REVIEW

A BULLETIN OF THE AMERICAN TEXTBOOK COUNCIL

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For several months Americans have been rocked by events in Germany, Eastern Europe, and the Soviet Union that continue to unfold. In one country after another, governments have collapsed. Common citizens long thought resigned to omnipotent and oppressive regimes have expressed their unwillingness to abide these conditions, at least in the absence of military terror.

Last year, about 350,000 of 17 million East Germans voted with their feet, choosing to uproot themselves from their homes, jobs, and in many cases, families in order to taste individual freedom and economic opportunity. In the March elections, those who remained voted overwhelmingly against four decades of failure. As Germany moves inexorably toward reunification, old fears and anxieties abound. An economy of 80 million people producing 10 percent of the European Community's gross domestic product should give pause, as must Germany's history of aggressive nationalism. Inside the Soviet Union discord from the Baltic to the Caucasus continues, and what the 1990s will bring to that country cannot be known.

This is history still in the oven, bringing to an end the geopolitical arrangements of almost half a century. Momentous changes with powerful historic roots have rendered all social studies textbooks out of date, reminding us that history is a dynamic subject without end, increasingly speculative as it moves from the chronicled past into current affairs. Yet it is these texts that students in elementary grades, and in world history and geography classes, are reading. For this reason, we devote most of this issue to reviews of the current fare in these course areas, including a special evaluation of the Holocaust's treatment in secondary-level textbooks by a distinguished scholar of the subject.

We have surveyed a dozen books, a representative selection of the texts that young people encounter in learning about the world

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A major review of twelve leading world history and geography textbooks; also a review of an exceptional text on Russia for high school students.

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The way that world history textbooks present an appalling historical event leaves much to be desired.

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around them. These books attempt to encompass the history, geography, and current affairs of all the world. This is a task asking for trouble. The result can be an indiscriminate compendium of words and pictures that mixes the trivial and trendy with events of overarching significance. Narrative can be thin or absent, and potentially great stories are missing. Elementary and junior high school texts present the biggest problem. One of the newer sixth grade books, Macmillan's *Eastern Hemisphere*, dispatches Julius Caesar and the Roman Empire in a few pages. Acid rain gets almost the same amount of attention. Moreover, in grade school books, complex information is simplified repeatedly to the point of misrepresentation. ("Imagine how houseplants would react if they were sprinkled with vinegar!")

It is sobering to remember that in spite of faddish chat about global studies and interdependence, recent surveys have documented profound geographic illiteracy. Less than half of U.S. high school students take any world history at all. In some classrooms European history, notably European political history, is extremely unfashionable. Nonetheless, concepts like balance of power, sovereignty, and nationalism have new immediacy. Will American students who believe—incorrectly—that the Berlin Wall has magically disappeared think that all has turned out for the best? Or taking their freedom for granted, will they even care if it has?

Texts that encompass and analyze breaking events in Europe, as well as China and Latin America, will necessarily be some time in coming, in some cases, two or three years hence, and of course there is no guarantee that future events will not date them also. It is reassuring, however, that a new generation of social studies textbooks is in development or on press. We will see many new—or fully revised—books for elementary and high school students come onto the market during the early 1990s.

As it happens, California is right now in the midst of a statewide adoption of social studies texts for kindergarten through eighth grade. The state's curriculum differs from most state and local mandates. It seeks to combine the best elements of a history-centered curriculum with fresh subject matter and a multicultural perspective. Publishers debated the California approach throughout the late 1980s, first, because they could not afford to ignore entirely the nation's most populous state, controlling about 11 percent of the national market.

This spring, publishers were expected to make public in California their new products bearing 1990 and 1991 copyrights. During the preceding weeks publishers engaged in much backing and filling. Some companies were trying to tart up old texts to meet California's standards and at the same time conform to other state and local curricula. Others were sitting out the adoption, taking a wait-and-see attitude and wondering if state-based textbook adoption in California and elsewhere might just go away.

Elementary-level social studies textbooks are in flux. Last year, Macmillan rolled out a new series, much improved in content and design compared to its stale, oft revised prior program. It is reportedly cutting deep into Silver Burdett's series, which during the 1980s dominated elementary-level social studies sales. But the Macmillan program still adheres to established curricular frameworks, and the company at least feigned the possibility of a last-minute withdrawal from the California competition. Concurrently, Houghton Mifflin has developed a new series for kindergarten through eighth grade based on California's curriculum. This important state adoption will be played out during the next few months. Given its national significance, we will return to the subject, featuring it in the next issue of the *Social Studies Review*.

In the meantime, we are convinced that this issue's wide-ranging assessment of elementary and secondary textbooks on matters of Eastern Europe and Russia will prove illuminating. On the premise also that good instructional materials are not always textbooks, we suggest that some enterprising teachers dust off their copies of George Orwell's wonderful little fable, *Animal Farm*, and consider using it as a supplement in junior high and senior high school classes. This memorable story considers what happens when government does not derive from the consent of the governed. Written at the end of World War II, when

Stalinism was showing its true colors, Orwell's classic still provides a vivid civics lesson that all American students can and should take to heart.

CRISIS IN THE EAST: How Textbooks Treat Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union

By Peter Cannon

Ongoing turmoil in Russia and Eastern Europe has caught all of us by surprise. Despite long-standing popular unrest and economic stagnation in erstwhile Soviet satellites, few could have forecast events like the breach of the Berlin Wall and the Lithuanian declaration of independence. Just as amazing, to date every country of the Eastern bloc, except Rumania, has revolted peacefully, going far to deconstruct the totalitarian governments in place since the 1940s. How well do elementary and high school textbooks prepare students for these dramatic developments?

If the early success of these democratic movements is astonishing, the yearning for freedom and economic reform may have struck many young Americans as curious. Unburdened by a bloodstained recent history, living in a secure and free country, they have the luxury of being able to ignore world affairs. American students, especially those taught to regard "Eurocentric" as a naughty word, may not have received the information they need from their textbooks to understand the historical significance of current events—or to appreciate the gulf between West and East. Without a firm idea of what Communism is, how can they understand its demise? Can children accustomed to neat television-like endings comprehend events that may take years to resolve?

A number of elementary-level texts stand as testaments to the hard fact that some abstract political and economic concepts are too difficult for grade schoolers to grasp. On the other hand, even at the secondary level, some instructional material is too obvious. Innumerable "critical thinking" questions are often foolish, sometimes odd, as in *Exploring World History*, a dismal text by every measure, which asks: "How do you think Stalin's belonging to a race of mountain people may have affected the way he ruled?"

Elementary Social Studies

While textbook treatments of the Eastern bloc vary in quality, instructional materials are least satisfactory for elementary-level students, who normally encounter world history in sixth grade. Part of the problem of course is the sophisticated subject matter. Only through artful teaching, careful chronology, and exciting prose can a twelve-year-old fathom topics like the Russian expansion over the Eurasian continent under the czars, the late arrival of European culture into Russian domains, or the nineteenth-century worker movements that culminated in the Bolshevik revolution of 1917. And how can any text at this level clearly convey the mysteries of the Soviet economy or financial system?

Many elementary-level social studies books delve into such subjects, but not with great insight and certainly not with the dramatic and eye-opening stories that could be substituted for many current lessons. How about the story of the White Russians against the Reds? Where are the memorable, spine-tingling, even James Bond–like stories about Cossacks, Siberian labor camps, or the KGB?

The one topic these textbooks do address is the issue of freedom. Holt, Rinehart's *The World* states: "People in the Soviet Union have very little freedom. Those who criticize the government can lose their jobs or be put in jail." But this judgment has little meaning in a text that never mentions Marx or Stalin. A rosy one-page profile of Peter the Great praises his efforts to modernize the country—"Peter also set up new industries that helped Russia become a strong, modern nation"—while the main narrative sends an almost opposite message: "Before the 1920's, the Soviet Union had very little industry. It was a poor farming nation."

The text goes on to state that the country today is an industrial power: "The Soviet Union manufactures almost everything, from buses to clothing, from refrigerators to

computers." But it fails to comment on chronic shortages of consumer goods or restricted access to computers. While *The World* does remark on social inequalities in Soviet society, congestion in the cities, and primitive conditions in rural areas, it neglects to pin responsibility for such problems on the command economy. Like the Soviets themselves, it extols the benefits of socialism while ignoring the issue of quality: "The Soviet Union provides all of its people with free medical care, free dental care, free day care for small children, and free vacations."

The World is especially weak on the Russian Revolution: "In early 1917, the people staged strikes to protest shortages of food and coal. Later that year a man named Vladimir Ilyich Lenin led a revolution and the tsar was overthrown." So much for the Kerensky government, which removed Nicholas II, not Lenin, and the struggle between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks.

At the elementary level, of course, history texts have to be highly selective. *The World*'s design and typography are appealing, and the text aspires to be an easy read. But it is puzzling why the authors choose to highlight Denmark as a representative European country yet fail to discuss any of the nations of Eastern Europe.

Scott, Foresman's *Our World: Yesterday and Today* supplies much of the pre-revolutionary Russian history left out by the Holt book, touching on such events as the Mongol invasion in the thirteenth century and the abolition of serfdom under Alexander II. Peter the Great and Catherine the Great are absent, but a special map section nicely illustrates the course of Russian expansion. The text explains that Communism was rooted in the ideas of a nineteenth-century German philosopher named Karl Marx, who is quoted. It also gives a more accurate picture of the revolution than the Holt program, stating that for "about eight months, the Russian government was in a state of confusion" before the Bolsheviks seized power at the end of 1917.

Our World, however, falls short of the ideal. The book says little more about the enormity of Stalin's crimes than "Millions died under Stalin's terror." A useful lesson on how the Communist party and government work today is followed by "Life in the Soviet Union," a feature about a fictional girl named Ludya. Though Ludya and her family belong to the Muscovy elite—her father is a party member—they live modestly by Western standards. They do not own a car and are grateful to have their own apartment without having to share a kitchen and bathroom.

While the textbook's developers have designed this generic Russian girl to help American sixth graders relate to a foreign culture, Ludya comes across as kind of sappy. At the ballet, for example: "Watching the ballerinas glide and soar across the stage in 'Swan Lake,' Ludya wishes she were talented enough to be so graceful." Ludya is apt to prompt yawns or snickers in an American classroom, where sixth graders are more attuned to MTV than Tchaikovsky.

In the chapter on Eastern Europe, which treats individual countries and their differences, *Our World* does not dwell on economic matters, though it does point out the desire of many citizens for a market economy. Like most texts, it gives Rumania the benefit of the doubt. "The Romanian government is trying hard to improve the country's industry," the text reads, neglecting to mention the nation's export policy at the expense of its citizens' diet and comfort.

A box on Castle Dracula might have been an opportunity to link past with present evil—a connection that in fact made Ceaucescu and his henchmen uneasy—but instead the authors outline the familiar vampire story and present the castle as Rumania's equivalent of Disneyland: "Thousands of tourists come to Romania each year to see Castle Dracula. They walk around its stone walls and look through its narrow windows. What do you suppose they expect to see?" What the "right" answer is, we cannot be sure. Comrade Ceaucescu, reborn as a tiny bat?

Harcourt Brace Jovanovich's *The World: Past and Present* covers topics in more depth than either the Holt or the Scott, Foresman programs. The design is less flashy than that of these other two books. Content and style are far superior. While the authors exclude early Russian history, they give Karl Marx and the Communist Manifesto a separate section and properly stress the backwardness of the

country before the 1917 revolution: "In the 1800s most Russians lived just as Europeans had in the Middle Ages. European history—the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Industrial Revolution—had touched the Russian people only slightly, if at all."

The text also makes it clear that one autocratic regime was replaced by a government just as oppressive: "In November 1917, Lenin and the Bolsheviks seized control of the government. They made the Communist party the only legal political party in Russia. They destroyed groups that disagreed with them. The Communists arrested or killed religious leaders, businesspeople [sic], and anyone who opposed their government. The government of ruthless czars had been replaced with yet another harsh government."

Harcourt Brace's *The World* is blunt about Stalin's rule: "He sent countless millions of people into slave labor camps. It is estimated that at least 30 million Soviet citizens died as Stalin's prisoners. His police spied on, arrested, and often tortured anyone suspected of opposing him." This kind of writing is a pleasant contrast to the namby-pamby prose of some elementary-level books.

A newer book, Macmillan's *Eastern Hemisphere*, is a carnival of colors and design. Some of its lessons are excellent, even though the text has difficulty competing with an overabundance of distracting study exercises. Overall, the book does not match Harcourt Brace's *The World*. Again, infuriatingly, it makes the error that Lenin overthrew Nicholas II: "By November 1917, Lenin's followers took over government buildings and arrested the leaders of the tsar's government."

Eastern Hemisphere covers the Soviet Union's geography and multicultural tensions with some dexterity. It even mentions the opening of the Berlin Wall. But the literary problems in trying to jam landmark events into one last-minute paragraph are evident: "By 1989, the countries of Eastern Europe were changing quickly. People demanded greater freedoms, and the communist governments were responding. Free elections were held in Poland. Even the Berlin Wall, long the symbol of the Cold War, was opened. East Germans once again were allowed to travel to the West." Here, all verve disappears, and students are left with utterly flattened, dead writing.

Secondary World History

Junior and senior high school world history textbooks are superior to their lower-level counterparts. With greater scope, these texts provide a more satisfactory picture of such subjects as the 1917 revolution, Stalin's rise to power, and collectivization. There are exceptions. *Exploring World History* dumbs down subject matter to a degree that would make a literate elementary book like Harcourt Brace's *The World* a preferable text for less able secondary students. *Exploring World History* does get the sequence of events in 1917 right. But subsequent history is so compressed and disjointed as to be meaningless:

"Thousands of Russians were against the Communist government. Many of them were put in prison, sent to forced labor camps in Siberia, or murdered by those in power. World War I and the Russian Revolution had helped to destroy the Russian economy. Communist reforms were unable to solve the problems. Food crops were poor. Many people were starving. The Communist party, however, remained master of the nation. When Lenin died, in 1924, Joseph Stalin took his place as dictator. Stalin was a harsh ruler. He destroyed those he thought were enemies of communism. He also plotted the murder of Communist leaders he believed were against him. Stalin remained in power until his death, in 1953."

Merrill's *Global Insights* is a better book than *Exploring World History*. This is not to say that the text is satisfactory. Among other things, it shortchanges Europe, past and present. It includes a unit on the Soviet Union, but Eastern Europe is simply missing.

At least *Global Insights* brings into high relief the collapse of the czarist regime and the advent of Communism. Lenin's ruthlessness—"All opposition to the Communist leadership was banned, and anyone suspected of being an 'enemy of the people' was imprisoned, shot, or forced into exile"—forms a prelude to Stalin's excesses: "Soviet citizens accused of disloyalty were shot or sent to labor

camps in Siberia, where only the hardiest survived. Even members of the Communist party were not safe. In the late 1930's, Stalin purged, or removed, many of Lenin's old associates from their positions and had them tried and executed."

All of this is enlightening for students, who scarcely need for understanding an inane "critical thinking" question at the end of the section, "How would you feel if you lived in a country where you could be arrested and imprisoned or exiled for a large part of your life with so little to say about the matter?"

Global Insights, like many texts, tends to exaggerate the success of the Soviet economy. It acknowledges that "widespread corruption and inefficiency in the bureaucracy often has blunted effectiveness in certain areas, such as the quantity and quality of consumer goods." It also asserts, "In spite of such weaknesses, the Soviet economy has expanded rapidly under this system, and the Soviet Union now ranks second only to the United States in overall industrial productivity."

Missing here is any comment on the stagnation of the Brezhnev era or the USSR's primitive technology. The size of the Soviet economy has for years been based on data that many scholars have begun to challenge as unreliable. According to some estimates, the Soviet GNP may be closer to 25 percent of ours instead of half, as most textbooks indicate. Until the Soviet government starts to release accurate figures on its economy, the true size cannot be known.

Like *Global Insights*, *Human Heritage: A World History* is published by Merrill, now a unit of Macmillan. It is also aimed at junior high school students but appropriate as an easy reader at the high school level. It is a much finer book. First of all, it takes a chronological approach that is more effective than that of *Global Insights*, which begins with Africa and moves alphabetically through regions of the world.

Human Heritage covers early Russian history more thoroughly than *Global Insights*, although it devotes somewhat less space to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The writing is adequate or better: "Like the tsars, Stalin maintained his power through censorship and terror. He controlled everything that was publicly written, said, or heard in the Soviet Union. In 1934, he carried out a series of purges, or removal of undesirable members, of the Communist party and the Red Army. The secret police arrested millions of people. Many were given 'show trials' in which they publicly confessed their 'mistakes' before being sentenced to imprisonment or death."

Human Heritage minces no words as it identifies such current Soviet problems as the economy, religion, dissidents, and the satellite countries of Eastern Europe. But when it cites Soviet achievements, like other textbooks, it overlooks the failures of socialism: "The Soviet government provides free medical service for all citizens. It has taught almost everyone how to read and write. It has built museums and theatres all over the country." What about the quality of that free medical care? How meaningful is a high literacy rate in a country that censors what people can read or write? Does having a rich cultural heritage make the average Soviet citizen feel any better about being unable to travel outside the Communist bloc?

One of the best high school texts in the field, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich's *World History: People and Nations*, geared to college-bound students in the tenth to twelfth grades, rightfully places the industrial woes of the East at center stage: "During the late 1970s and 1980s, the economies of the Eastern European nations, in general, began to show signs of fragility. Outdated factories and machinery, products of poor quality, low levels of worker productivity, the imbalanced trade arrangements, and a huge foreign debt all contributed to this economic weakness."

The text proceeds to outline the recent failures even of such putative "economic miracle" countries as East Germany, Hungary, and Yugoslavia: "For example, in Yugoslavia, once one of Eastern Europe's most vigorous economies, industrial output increased only marginally in 1987, and farm output actually fell. The annual rate of inflation reached 150 percent, and unemployment pushed toward 10 percent. Debts owed to other countries proved to be Yugoslavia's most crushing economic problem, however. In 1987, the government had to ask its creditors to reschedule repayment requirements for $19 billion." The lucky

student who absorbs this up-to-date text will gain real insight into economic affairs in Eastern Europe today.

Another superior text is Houghton Mifflin's *History of the World*. This book provides the details that other world histories often leave out, like the persecution of the kulaks: "Stalin saw the kulaks as enemies of socialism, and he told Party workers to 'liquidate the kulaks as a class.' Thousands were shot or sent to gulags—forced-labor camps. Many of the remaining peasants killed their horses, cows, and pigs rather than turn them over to the collective." *History of the World* makes the consequences of collectivization clear: "Farming output plummeted. The loss of livestock caused severe shortages of meat, dairy products, leather goods, and fertilizer. In 1932-1933 a severe famine hit many parts of the Soviet Union. Although his own people were starving, Stalin went on selling food abroad. As many as 10 million people died as a result of collectivization."

Good secondary-level histories of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union exist. Contrary to some fears, these texts present Communist oppression and economic failure accurately and sometimes boldly. Not surprisingly, the most nuanced writing is found in high school texts for college-bound students. The subject matter, after all, is difficult. But a book like *Human Heritage* shows that commendable fare is possible for younger and less able students.

World Geography

Geography texts cannot be expected to examine political history in depth. But the evasions in McDougal, Littell's *World Geography* should disturb: "After Lenin died in 1924, Joseph Stalin became the country's leader. A series of 'Five Year Plans' were launched in 1928 to modernize Soviet industry and agriculture. As a result, millions of small farms in the Soviet Union were combined by the government into larger farms. The purpose was to increase farm output through mechanization and to release millions of farmers to work in the factories being built in the cities." Stalin himself could scarcely object to this account. Without any comment on the Ukrainian resistance and genocide of the 1930s, the process sounds reasonable, at worst an inconvenience to people forced to give up their property. Ironically, the next paragraph notes that "tens of millions" died as a result of the Nazi invasion in World War II.

A broad view of what the authors of *World Geography* call the European "culture realm" barely distinguishes between West and East. In the name of balance, case studies examine a Bulgarian Black Sea resort and the English Channel tunnel project, focusing on the benefits and drawbacks of each. After discussing the Common Market, the text merely says of COMECON, the Eastern counterpart: "It too was successful in improving the flow of goods between its members as well as with the rest of Europe and the world." Not only is this incorrect. Once again, students are led to think that life in Western and Eastern Europe is pretty much the same.

The conclusion, "The Future of Europe," identifies ethnic unrest among minorities as mainly a Western concern, citing "the Basques in Spain, the Croatians in Yugoslavia, the Scots in Great Britain, the Bretons in France, and the Flemings in Belgium." Far more relevant would have been comment on the Turkish guest workers in West Germany or the forced absorption of the Baltic republics into the Soviet Union. This text instead trivializes the case of Azerbaijan through an invented story of human rights, Caucasus-style. The ethnic tensions and demographic complexities of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, key subjects for a geography text, are left untold.

Two other secondary-level geography texts have better historical context than the McDougal, Littell book. Holt's *World Geography Today*, for example, describes collectivization with harsh realism:

"Stalin's Five Year Plans resulted in dramatic industrial growth. However, Stalin's policies were opposed by many. The Soviet people were forced to make great sacrifices in order to make industrial growth possible. Stalin's greatest opposition came from farmers. Many farmers were unhappy about losing their land and animals to collectives. In the prosperous Ukraine, farmers rebelled by attacking officials and burning farm buildings. Many were killed and others were

sent to Siberian labor camps. In the middle 1930s, Stalin's farm policies caused a great famine in the farming regions. More than six million people died of starvation."

World Geography Today also gives a somber picture of the contemporary Soviet Union, going well beyond geography to describe the larger culture: "All Soviet citizens are expected to sacrifice and make communism the most important aspect of their lives. The Soviet government has made heavy industry and the production of military goods more important than providing consumer goods. As a result, consumer goods are expensive, and there is little variety available. Soviet people must frequently line up to buy goods at stores." Here the relation between the system and the life of the ordinary Soviet citizen is clear.

Glencoe's *World Geography* devotes the bulk of its section on Eastern Europe to a cultural and economic survey. This text remarks correctly on the richness of Russian contributions to literature, music, ballet, and film, while emphasizing the difficult position of the artist: "Authors, composers, poets, painters, and other artists are not allowed complete freedom of expression. Instead, they are encouraged to create works that reflect government ideology."

The Glencoe book is excellent when it considers the economy of the region. It places the blame for cereal crop shortages not just on bad weather but also on centralized planning: "For example, in setting goals for milk production, Soviet planners have used information about the size of farms to determine how many dairy cows could be grazed on each farm. This information, however, did not tell how much grazing land was available or how many dairy cows could be fed on it. As a result, dairy cows have been put on farms that could not support widespread grazing." From a specific example like this, the student can understand why the Eastern Europeans, and even the Soviets themselves, are hastening to decentralize their economies and introduce market forces.

* * *

As Western Europe moves toward economic union in 1992, and as Eastern Europe scrambles to catch up, the decade ahead will almost certainly see changes more profound than any since World War II. Publishers now have the opportunity to develop textbooks that will prepare the students to understand the reasons for these changes. The next generation of texts should stress that the quest for freedom is not just a Western ideal but one with universal appeal. It has special appeal for individuals who live under repressive, inefficient regimes.

For decades the Eastern Europeans and Soviets have not just been pursuing an alternative course that has worked well enough for them, however distasteful it may strike many Americans. In fact, they have fallen increasingly out of step with other advanced nations. As they themselves now acknowledge, they have lagged behind the rest of the industrialized world, with its integrated technical and financial systems. They can no longer afford not to join the club. The crucial lesson is to recognize that today's Eastern leaders, like Peter the Great, must turn to the West if their countries are to prosper and nourish the human spirit.

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Russia is part of a Houghton Mifflin program called World Regional Studies, a paperback series for high school students. It is conveniently sized, under three hundred pages, and far more wieldy than the usual six-pound world history monster. Its crisp prose makes the volume often read more like a good general interest book than a text.

Russia gives a historical overview of this complicated nation but emphasizes topical concerns and current events. The problem is that such analysis—even description—can quickly date. Covering developments up to a year ago, before the dissolution of the Eastern bloc, the text warns that there is "danger that reforms will go too far and that the USSR will feel compelled to intervene" in its then satellite nations. Why the Kublins chose to use the word *danger* and what they meant by *go too far* remains an open question. But, of course, this "danger" seems more than remote now that the front line of Soviet influence is being contested at the border of Lithuania. In late March, Soviet jets were buzzing Vilnius, a none too subtle signal from Moscow that efforts to secede could lead to civil war.

The volume opens with an excellent profile of the land and its people, moving on to the expansion of the Russian empire through Eurasia and the century-long drift toward revolution. The second half of the book, which surveys the Soviet period, is less even. Repeatedly the authors slip into the passive tense, especially when describing the horrors of the regime. "The Soviet people were expected to sacrifice comforts in order to bring the level of industrialization of their country up to that of industrial developments in capitalist countries," says the text in an abstract and all too typical sentence.

Stalinist atrocities receive cursory treatment: "During the period of the first three five-year plans, at least five million peasants lost their lives. Some were simply murdered. Others were deported to Siberian prison camps, where they later died." The section on Stalin's aggressive behavior at the end of World War II, resulting in the establishment of the Eastern bloc and advent of the Cold War, is remarkably thin.

Frequent subheads, including section and chapter endings, interrupt the narrative. Chapter summaries tempt the unmotivated student to ignore the main text. While vocabulary, geography, and biography lists to identify and define lend graphic variety, there are far too many of them.

The book is also rife with vague "critical thinking" questions of the sort that have infected textbooks at all levels, like "Why was nothing done to improve conditions for Russian peasants?" After a candid review of the pitiful Soviet railway and highway system, the text asks: "Why are there few cars and trucks in the USSR?" The right answer is that "government-owned automobile factories simply cannot keep up with demand."

The events of the last year make it necessary for Houghton Mifflin to go back to the drawing board. Fashioning an outstanding book should not be difficult, given the literary quality of this edition. To begin, the Kublins could delete most of the instructional material at the end of sections and chapters, thus streamlining an already lean text. With a strong unbroken narrative, they could then more sharply define the differences between East and West. Finally, they could stress such subjects of contemporary interest as the Lithuanian independence movement or the Communist Party's relinquishing its monopoly of power.

Just as the United States had to reassess its global role in the early 1970s, so the Soviet Union must consider its human condition, material failures, ethnic tensions, and imperial limits in the 1990s. This is a crucial story of our times, and *Russia* begins to provide the kind of materials that students need in serious global studies.

THE HOLOCAUST AND THE TEXTBOOKS

By Lucy S. Dawidowicz

Doctors, upon receiving their degrees, take the Hippocratic oath, vowing to practice medicine for the good of the sick and, at the least, not to spread disease. In this spirit, the Department of Education might institute a Socratic oath, an equivalent obligation binding on all textbook writers, editors, and publishers, committing them honorably to educate the young and, at the least, not to miseducate them.

Textbooks too often fall prey to political activists and special-interest groups, each demanding that contents be revised in accordance with their versions and visions of history. To appease the protesters, publishers ensure before a book's next printing that the text is, to paraphrase Swift, blotted out, corrected, enlarged, diminished, and interlaced.

This failure of textbooks is noticeably evident in the way they present the history of the murder of the European Jews during the Second World War. For a quarter of a century, the subject was scarcely mentioned in world history textbooks. In response to such criticism back in 1979, the then vice president of the Association of American Publishers' school division said: "Books reflect the thinking and views of people in a given time. The Holocaust was not uppermost in people's minds until there was a TV show about it." So much for the place of the Holocaust in history and the publishers' obligation to the task of education.

Nowadays most world history textbooks, which survey nothing less than all mankind's history from start to finish, include something about the Holocaust, even if it is no more than a few paragraphs. To judge by an examination of several books that are widely used in courses from seventh through twelfth grade, not all of them cover the immediately relevant material satisfactorily. That material, as I see it, should include the rise of the Nazi regime, racial anti-Semitism as the underpinning of Nazi ideology, Germany's domestic and foreign policies leading to war, and the fate of the Jews, first in Nazi Germany and then in German-ruled Europe, culminating in the premeditated and systematized murder of six million Jews.

Holt, Rinehart's *People and Our World: A Study of World History* (1981) and Scott, Foresman's *History and Life* (1990) are better than others in covering that span of history coherently, each doing so in about two or three pages of text. Even so, they are flawed. *People and Our World* fails to mention the place of anti-Semitism in Hitler's rise to power. *History and Life* incorrectly dates the "Final Solution" as of 1942, with the start of the operations of the death camps, though the murder of the Jews began in the summer of 1941, with mass shootings on territory seized from Russia.

McDougal, Littell's *A World History: Links across Time and Place* (1988) and Merrill's *Global Insights* (1988) are unbelievably bad in their treatments. *A World History* is written in kindergarten English that reflects its intellectual level: "Hitler believed that Germans were members of a superior race. He deprived people of their civil rights if he thought they were inferior to Germans." There are historical errors (for instance, characterizing the Rhineland as "neutral" instead of "demilitarized"), even though this text claims as its senior consultant the eminent historian William H. McNeill. In the two rudimentary paragraphs about the murder of the Jews, the names of two of the death camps are wrong. Majdanek is misspelled and the concentration camp Belsen in Germany is mistaken for the death camp Belzec in Poland.

Global Insights is composed in abecedarian English that matches its intellectual level. Two pages are devoted to the murder of the Jews. The first, entitled "The Holocaust" and appearing in the unit on Western Europe, begins: "Adolf Hitler made the Jews the scapegoats for all of Germany's troubles and set out to eliminate them." Nothing in the text before or after mentions the word "anti-Semitism" or offers any explanation for Hitler's actions. The rest of the page consists of extracts from diaries by two non-Jewish survivors of concentration camps, which have nothing to do with the murder of the Jews. The second page concerning the Holocaust, which appears in the unit on Eastern Europe, says of the state of the Jews: "The Jewish

population, in particular, suffered greatly."

Only Bulgaria receives mention among East European countries, because it saved most of its Jews. Two sentences and a diary extract about the Warsaw ghetto uprising follow. But all context is lacking, for nowhere is there any mention of the 3.3 million Jews who lived in Poland before the war, of Nazi crimes in Poland, or of the 300,000 Jews of Warsaw who had been deported to the death camp at Treblinka before the Warsaw ghetto uprising.

But even if these textbooks gave better information about the murder of the European Jews, can young people be expected to comprehend this terrible history if they do not learn about the continuous and cumulative tradition of anti-Semitism throughout the centuries that made the Holocaust possible? A couple of paragraphs about the Crusades, which some texts offer, does not suffice.

Furthermore, how can students grasp the horror of the Holocaust if they are unfamiliar with the biblical revulsion against murder as the primordial crime? None of these textbooks—good, bad, or indifferent—refers specifically to the Sixth Commandment, because none, except the latest edition of *History and Life*, has enumerated the Ten Commandments or even summarized their content. Nor does any text explain that the Ten Commandments are the very basis of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and the moral foundation for our civilization. How, then, can young people understand the evil that is the murder of the European Jews, if they are not taught that all cultures abhor premeditated murder as the most heinous of all crimes?

Lucy S. Dawidowicz is the author of *The War against the Jews 1933-1945*, *A Holocaust Reader*, and other books.

NOTED WITH INTEREST

★ In a textbook controversy that has provoked lawsuits and even threats of violence, a number of California school districts have decided to drop Holt, Rinehart's popular elementary-level reading series, *Impressions*. Spurred by the so-called Citizens for Excellence in Education, a Christian group located in Orange County, concerned but ill-informed parents all over the state are demanding that these literature-based texts be removed from the classroom. They charge that the books are sacrilegious or morbid.

The *Impressions* series does not deserve this concerted and sometimes vicious attack. Developed in Canada in the early 1980s and one of 17 programs adopted by California in 1987, it includes work by Lewis Carroll, C. S. Lewis, and Maurice Sendak. Most of the reading selections are innocuous. A few stories and poems are quite vivid. In one poem for fifth graders, thirteen skeletons dance the night away. In another selection, "Underwater pigs glide between reefs of coral debris. They love it here. . . . They live on dead fish and rotting things, drowned pets, plastic and assorted excreta. Rusty cans they love the best." The same book contains a charming diary of the birth and infancy of a mouse. Outrage has centered on a parody of "The Twelve Days of Christmas" in the third grade reader that some may find amusing in an offbeat way: "On the eleventh day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, eleven lizards boiling, ten ground hogs grinning, nine nightmares galloping, eight snow wolves wailing, seven ghouls a-caroling, six shadows lurking, five useless things, four raven wings, three cobwebs, two bags of soot, and a wart snake in a fig tree."

Grade schoolers, of course, like gory tales and gross subject matter. They do not thereby grow up to be sociopaths, the fears of the sanctimonious and overly fastidious to the contrary. Where is the problem, if there is any problem? It could be argued that in an effort to be up-to-date and lively, *Impressions* is guilty of minor lapses of taste. Why offer an odd revision of "The Twelve Days of Christmas," more appropriate to Halloween, when the lovely and poetic original will do? A more valid complaint perhaps is that the *Impressions* series does not contain enough classic children's literature, including fairy tales and myths. What is scary and revealing about the dispute is how easily textbooks that seek to entertain and be memorable can offend one or another group—causing undeserved headaches and lost revenues for their publishers.

★ Few would dispute that historical fiction can have a place in social studies courses. Novels, after all, make lively reading, much more so, sad to report, than textbooks. While good historical fiction can stimulate thinking and make history vital and relevant, what happens when texts mix fact and fiction in the same book? Most textbook buyers don't realize that many mass market social studies textbooks gild the lily, breaking the running text with stories—usually insipid—about invented children in an effort to "humanize" a society or culture.

Last winter Cincinnati went one step further and provoked considerable controversy by adopting *Cincinnati: An Urban History*, a text for grade schools produced by the local historical society. This book tries to convey the history of "ordinary people" by mingling fictional characters—many of them children and teenagers, women and blacks—with real historical figures. For example, the imaginary fifteen-year-old Enoch Bunnell becomes an apprentice to Henry Boyd, an actual nineteenth-century Cincinnati furniture maker.

As with mass market texts, the most vexing problem from the standpoint of narrative is that Bunnell and other figures serve solely to make some didactic point. Implicit too is the assumption that a textbook based on verifiable evidence and primary sources cannot be as compelling as one that embellishes. In any case, blurring the distinction between history and fiction before young people have had a chance to develop a firm sense of the difference is a perilous venture. Even though the book has an appealing style and, at the start of each chapter, clearly identifies who is real and who is not, mixing genres as it does asks for trouble.

★ In January, a prominent PaineWebber textbook analyst, Kendrick Noble, Jr., addressed the American Association of Publishers school division. In his forecast for the 1990s, he asserted that publishers' nightmares last year were mainly the temporary result of expanded marketing costs and consolidation, not a permanent condition. Far from it. Sales will match or exceed the boom period from 1955 to 1965, Noble thinks. An expected 13 percent rise in school enrollments during the 1990s will produce more than a 9 percent gain in textbook sales in 1990 and 11 percent for the decade. Noble foresees a need for publishers to meet demands in smaller, more specialized markets. This trend, he said, will create "more opportunities for smaller, faster publishers with low overheads," that is, for supplementary materials and boutique publishers. Noble faulted the optimism of publishing executives during the 1980s and the excessive consideration publishers give to state adoptions. Problems that could arise in the coming decade, Noble said, could be added competition from computers and alternative media, and erratic public funding, especially given an aging population with no personal connection to students or schools.

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SOCIAL STUDIES REVIEW

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THE CALIFORNIA ADOPTION

This summer, the state of California is in the midst of a statewide social studies textbook adoption for kindergarten through eighth grade. This event gives every indication of being a crucial textbook adoption for the 1990s. While California's board of education will not approve the final list of books until the fall, the adoption already heralds a new generation of social studies texts. The adoption's outcome will inevitably influence the design and content of social studies texts to be developed in this decade. For this reason we devote the summer issue of the *Social Studies Review* to major books and programs that have been submitted to the adoption.

First, we will review the circumstances of this important adoption and what it means for instructional materials. The story of the California adoption began several years ago, when the nation's most populous state, led by state school superintendent Bill Honig, redesigned its social studies curriculum. The curriculum, adopted in 1987, deviated from social studies conventions. It rejected the dismal expanding environments, near-to-far, me-and-the-world-around-me approach used for decades in primary grades. It mandated more history and geography, more literature- and source-based instructional material. It took sophisticated multicultural approaches to subject matter, an innovation that should not be confused with the racialism and ethnic advocacy that often infects debates over text content.

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The new curriculum promised new textbooks below the high school level at the next adoption, scheduled for 1990. (California adopts high school texts at the local level.) State-level adoptions have little favor with textbook reformers. Such adoptions rarely do what they pretend to do: ensure quality and consistency in curriculum and instruction across a state.

But from the start, it seemed that California might do what state adoptions are supposed to do, that is, encourage curricular improvement through state-approved instructional materials. Moreover, what California does will undoubtedly affect the rest of the nation. The bellwether state has undisputed leverage, as it controls an estimated 11 percent of the nation's $1.7 billion schoolbook market.

The 1987 curriculum caused immediate headaches for publishers, who were expected to develop new materials and reorganize product lines to meet state standards. For publishers, state adoptions are an expensive nuisance. If a state adopts their books, they must then "resell" their products at the district level. An important state curriculum that does not conform to national conventions forces publishers to create new materials that are not germane to the wider market.

For example, California broke its American history into three parts: colonial and revolutionary in the fifth grade; early national to 1914 in the eighth grade; and twentieth century in the eleventh grade. None of the new textbooks conform strictly to this timeline, which many state teachers have also found confusing. The state also mandated ancient, medieval, and early modern history in the sixth and seventh grades. While this course content is to be welcomed—in fact is terrific—no instructional materials existed.

Last year, the American Association of Publishers and some ill-informed allies tried to bust state adoption in California's legislature. They failed. But a compromise law did make it possible for publishers to hope for "off-schedule" adoption and even dream of a fully defanged state framework by the middle 1990s.

Meanwhile, to its credit and singularly among publishers, Houghton Mifflin plunged ahead and invested millions in a new kindergarten through eighth grade series. Appearing this spring, this series hewed to the California curriculum with remarkable veracity. Macmillan was also developing a new elementary social studies series, less innovative than the Houghton Mifflin series, yet more history centered than social studies books of the 1980s. A Missouri-based niche publisher, Walsworth, submitted new materials for three grades.

Harcourt Brace Jovanovich and Silver Burdett withdrew from the competition, apparently aware that they were unable to offer materials consonant with curricular mandates. Harcourt Brace's early withdrawal was an apparent blessing for California's children, since these materials, reviewed also in this issue, bore no resemblance to what the state had requested. In fact, they exhibited the worst features of the expanding environments approach.

Silver Burdett's elementary social studies series dominated California and the nation in the mid-1980s. The former market leader tried to revise its way into compliance and failed. Unlike Harcourt Brace, it actually submitted books for adoption, then it pulled out when it realized that its materials could not compare to those of Macmillan and Houghton Mifflin.

Two other major companies, D. C. Heath and Scott, Foresman, sat the elementary adoption out, although they might return to the California market off-schedule in two years. Some publishers reportedly hope that California's curricular resolve will diminish and state-level adoption will be a thing of the past.

Now, only two major textbook publishers, Houghton Mifflin and Macmillan, remain in the elementary competition. Secondary-level submissions are few. This is a disappointment for those who had hoped for more. As some publishers predicted, California—whose mandates have annoyed them in the past—is giving a party but few guests are accepting. Publishers remain skeptical of the California curriculum. They are irritated by recent adoptions in the state. They argue that mandates in social studies and other subjects are coming too fast for teachers to absorb, sense some resistance to change, and have doubts about efforts to retrain faculties.

The Houghton Mifflin and Macmillan programs submitted to California seem destined to dominate social studies materials at the elementary level during the early 1990s. (The two publishers will also have formidable presence in junior and senior high school history classes.) Improvements in both series suggest that the persevering critique of social studies textbooks by public officials and historians during the late 1980s has already had striking effect.

What publishers have not successfully addressed is the plight of Spanish-speaking children who cannot read English and are semi-literate in their native tongue. What shall they read in class? Since an estimated 30 percent of the state's schoolchildren are Hispanic, this is a serious issue, as in other states, and the *Social Studies Review* expects to return to the problem soon.

California's education officials make the point that the state's adoption occurs grade-by-grade. In theory, this means—assuming that more than one series will be adopted—a district may purchase books for different grade levels from different publishers. In other words, book purchasers are not bound to any one series, and California may adopt only certain grades in a multi-volume program. The truth is, however, few buyers will pick and choose. For reasons of convenience and continuity, series will probably be purchased *in toto*. The competition for state domination in California will be intense.

In this issue, we examine the Macmillan and Houghton Mifflin programs in depth, comparing the offerings at the second and fifth grade levels. We also make some general remarks about the junior high submissions in American history. An early critic of elementary-level textbooks, A. Guy Larkins, reviews the failure of the expanding environments approach, reviewing primary grade textbooks that Harcourt Brace and Silver Burdett slated for submission to California and then withdrew.

It is our belief that these evaluations will be of great interest as early reports of what kinds of materials are likely to come onto the market during the coming decade. We are also pleased to note that with this issue, the *Social Studies Review* celebrates its first birthday and expands from twelve to sixteen pages.

TWO NEW SOCIAL STUDIES SERIES FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS: A Review

The Macmillan and Houghton Mifflin programs are the most recent social studies textbook series on the market, and they are the two elementary-level series under consideration for adoption by the state of California. Both of them remain faithful in part to the expanding environments idea. Nonetheless, these series attempt to bring history closer to the center of social studies coursework than books of the recent past, and for this basic advance they should be commended.

Macmillan, designing its texts for the national market yet hoping to capture California, tilts in the direction of history, not much more, in the primary grades. Houghton Mifflin, adhering strictly to the California curriculum yet hoping for a national audience, pays homage to social studies conventions outside the state while recasting the near-to-far approach in sometimes original ways.

Let us consider each series by inspecting offerings at the second and fifth grade levels. By second grade, many students have advanced beyond mere pictures. Subject matter and textual passages become more than rudimentary. Second graders ordinarily study neighborhoods and communities, and the California curriculum asks them to study people "who make a difference." In the fifth grade, students encounter their first course in American history.

The second grade Macmillan text declares in its foreword that it "focuses on neighborhoods and communities, stressing history, geography, economics, citizenship, and the humanities with lessons about other countries integrated into the units for easy comparison." These claims are excessive. Like other primary-level social studies books that cling to the near, concern with the familiar and the mundane tends to push substantive, exciting content toward the margin.

Take Macmillan's first lesson, the overture to the first unit called "Living in a Neighborhood":

Mike has just moved into a house in a different neighborhood. A neighborhood is a place where people live, work, and play.

Ann lives in the house next to Mike's house. Ann is Mike's neighbor. Neighbors are people who live near one another in a neighborhood.

Every neighborhood has homes where people live. In the neighborhood where Mike used to live, the homes were close together.

In the neighborhood where Mike lives now, the homes are farther apart.

And the beat goes on, as the book's eight-year-old readers encounter love and economics, receiving a treacly introduction to the culture of human caring and sharing:

All people have needs. Needs are the things we must have to live. We need food to stay healthy and to grow. We need clothes to protect us from the weather.

We need shelter. A shelter is a place to live. Shelters protect us from the weather, too.

We also need love and care. People also have wants. Wants are things we would like to have but can live without.

How do people get the things they need and want? Some people meet some of their needs and wants by themselves.

Most people buy the things they need and want in stores. They buy things that other people have made or grown.

This textbook, entitled *Neighborhoods and Communities*, is building toward a lesson called "Getting Services," which states: "You know that people use their money to buy goods. People also use their money to pay for services. Services are jobs that workers do for others. What jobs do these service workers do for others?"

Here, illustrations show a barber, a waitress, a cab driver, and a doctor—multiethnic, nonstereotypical, sanitized—to make the point. Do eight-year-olds need to be tortured by such dreary writing and impoverished subject matter? This kind of writing is as soporific as anything in the old Dick and Jane readers. The subject matter is arid, in fact, insulting to the interests and temperament of children of this age.

The Houghton Mifflin book, called *Some People I Know*, is more a potpourri than *Neighborhoods and Communities*. It tackles families, civics, and biography. To be blunt, the Houghton Mifflin book is less leaden and more interesting. For example, at the start of the book, the expanding horizons idea reaches out from the contents of a little girl's lunch box to make points about interdependence:

Someone had to grow the peanuts for her peanut butter sandwich. *Someone* had to pick the bananas. *Someone* had to get them to the store.

Many people do special jobs to bring food to you. You depend on them. If you depend on people, it means that you need them. You depend on people for many things besides food. Look around you. Who made your shoes? Who made your books? What other people do you depend on to make things for you?

Subsequent lessons proceed from the lunch box theme. Students follow the progress of a bunch of bananas from harvest in Honduras to arrival on the store shelf in the United States. The text is enhanced by an instructive diagram of a banana boat and a section called "How Bananas Grow," a little lesson on tropical farming.

What is appealing about all this? First, and very basic, the developers of the Houghton Mifflin book seem to understand the concrete interest of their subjects in food. Lessons move quickly from the familiar to the foreign and back to the familiar. They are not didactic, allowing students and teachers to appreciate the subject without being clubbed over the head by pseudo-sociology and sensitivity training. The subject matter is sometimes exotic and surprising.

The two books treat ethnicity and multiculturalism in different ways. In the Macmillan text, a passage reads:

Rosa and her family live in a country called Mexico. They live in a neighborhood in a large city called Mexico City.

There are many places in Rosa's neighborhood. There is a firehouse and a school. There are many street markets,

too. Rosa and her family do most of their shopping at these street markets.

Rosa and her family like to go to Mexico City's biggest park. They ride there on the subway called the Metro. The Metro is just one of the changes that has taken place in Rosa's neighborhood over the years.

In a comparable lesson, the Houghton Mifflin book features an actual Mexican-American girl named Teresa who lives in Los Angeles:

> Imagine living in the same house where your grandmother grew up. Teresa Sanchez does. She lives in the house where her grandmother *and* her mother grew up. She even goes to the same school they went to.
>
> Teresa's family has lived in East Los Angeles, California, for a long time. Their ancestors came from Mexico. They also speak English. They eat foods from the United States and Mexico. They enjoy the holidays of both countries, too.

This is not great writing. But Teresa's story—which runs to six pages compared with Rosa's two—goes on to list the Spanish words for boy, house, girl, and book. It tells children about *buñuelos*, a festive Mexican treat that Teresa's grandmother makes for New Year's Day, again bringing the subject of food onto the scene.

What is the difference? With Teresa, the eight-year-old reader is dealing with people, words, and cuisine. The subject matter is human. This is fundamentally different from the grim little story built around Mexico City's infrastructure—the development of firehouses, schools, and subways—that is the real point of Macmillan's lesson, where the invented Rosa is nothing but a cardboard figure.

Both of these second grade–level books make some concession to history and the exploration of historical issues. Macmillan includes a separate history unit, "America Long Ago," which artfully touches on the Indians, Jamestown, and Pilgrims. But in an effort to provide a bridge from the colonial period to the birth of the republic, it compresses history to the absurd:

> For a long time, the people in the 13 colonies followed the laws of England. Many people thought that England's laws were not fair for them. They wanted to be free to make their own laws.
>
> On July 4, 1776, they told the king of England that they were going to be a new, free country. They called their new country the United States of America.
>
> The king of England did not want the colonies to be free. He sent soldiers to America to fight against the Americans who wanted to be free. America and England had a war. George Washington led the Americans in the fight against the English. The war lasted for many years. Finally, the Americans won the war. They were free from England.

Far better to present vignettes or biographical sketches than try to do justice to the American Revolution in about a hundred words.

Both books do bring in historical figures such as Mary McLeod Bethune, Louis Braille, Roberto Clemente, Thomas Edison, and Benjamin Franklin. These individuals are designed mainly to serve as role models and promote pluralistic thinking. Houghton Mifflin's *Some People I Know* is interspersed with fine historical stories and episodes. One effective lesson in the text tells the tale of the Statue of Liberty, from French sculptor Bartholdi's initial vision of the project in 1871 to its glorious 1886 dedication in New York Harbor.

The illustrated glossary at the back of the Macmillan book includes words such as *services*, *taxes*, and *volunteers*, along with words like *needs*, *neighbor*, *neighborhood*, and *wants*. None of these words appear in the picture glossary at the back of the Houghton Mifflin book. Instead, it contains words like *ancestors*, *ballot*, *custom*, and *tradition*.

The two books' respective definitions of *vote* clearly reveal the gap between their intellectual expectations and tone. In the Macmillan text, to vote is "to choose something. We vote to go to the park." A picture shows a paper with checks underneath "park" and "zoo." In the Houghton Mifflin book, to vote is "to help make a decision by having your choice

counted." The accompanying picture shows a woman placing a ballot in a ballot box.

Still, like other texts for young children, these books are evasive. It is all very well to extol harmony and cooperation, but is it fair to children to protect them from certain unpleasant truths? People compete for goods and services. Some jobs are more prestigious than others. Many people, especially children, do not get their "needs and wants" satisfied. A sociologically balanced text would have to acknowledge that boys and girls often fight among one another, competing for things like toys and attention. The world conveyed is a sunny, upbeat one that avoids controversy, appropriate perhaps for children of this age but often so sugarcoated as to be dishonest.

Again, let it be said, a strong case can be made for the abandonment of official social studies textbooks in classes below the fourth grade level. While Houghton Mifflin's *Some People I Know* is a great advance over other such schoolbooks available for eight-year-olds and far surpasses anything on the market, it does not fully outdistance the many fascinating trade books that could just as easily be used in the second grade.

* * *

By the fifth grade, coherent and comprehensive textbooks that teach the basics of American history are available from both publishers. Both Macmillan's *United States and Its Neighbors* and Houghton Mifflin's *America Will Be* are salutary advances over the elementary-level American histories of the recent past. What is special about the Macmillan and the Houghton Mifflin texts is their sincere orientation toward history. Not long ago, social studies books at this level customarily devoted only about half of their contents to the subject.

Each history—which runs about 600 pages in length—concentrates on American history from pre-Columbian times through the nineteenth century, again conforming to the curricular mandates of California. Macmillan's text, not designed specifically for the California market, devotes considerable attention to late nineteenth and twentieth century America. The Houghton Mifflin series saves such material for eighth grade.

Between the second and fifth grades, both books would suggest, students have made an enormous leap in reading skills. The contents and subject matter are far more complex than what is found in the second grade texts. Lessons typically run between two and six pages, laid out in the kaleidoscopic format that allows teachers to present discrete lessons quickly and occasionally. The flashy design indicates the desire among teachers for television-competitive learning tools. In an effort to catch and hold its audience's attention, both texts risk distracting pupils by the overabundance of graphics and side attractions. Running narrative in both books is subordinate to endless illustrations and sidebars, skill units, summaries, and reviews. Sometimes, *America Will Be*'s format is so variegated as to be confusing; graphics, review, skill exercises, and more simply overwhelm its text.

Nonetheless, these two histories heed the call in recent years for better writing in elementary-level textbooks. In Macmillan's *United States and Its Neighbors*, for example, a passage on Christopher Columbus shows considerable verve:

> The farther west they sailed into the "sea of darkness," the more afraid Columbus's sailors became. To calm their fears, Columbus tricked them. He kept two books, or ships' logs, describing the voyage. Each day he wrote the real distance he thought they had traveled in a secret book. In the other book he wrote shorter distances. He showed the sailors the second book so they would not know how far they were from home.
>
> But the sailors still worried. They were afraid they would never see their homes again. By October 10, nerves were at the breaking point. The men demanded that Columbus turn back. Columbus listened to the crew and then made his decision. He agreed to return home if they did not find land in two days. It was just enough time. On October 12, land was sighted at last.

Houghton Mifflin's text does not match this prose on Columbus. On the other hand, it incorporates brilliantly the voyages of Colum-

bus into the larger subject of Iberian exploration and its impact on the American Indian and Mesoamerican cultures. It consistently explores American history in more original and inventive ways than its competitor.

Both books are stuffed with information. Students repeatedly encounter subject matter of great importance that they may be too young to grasp. Examples in Houghton are legion: in the case of abolition and slavery alone, the Missouri Compromise, the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the Second Great Awakening, popular sovereignty, and the Dred Scott case. To be fair to the publishers, however, the mandated curriculum in places encourages content overload at the fifth grade level.

It is all very well to extol harmony and cooperation, but is it fair to children to protect them from certain unpleasant truths?

Because of the critical thinking fad, both books repeatedly ask students to make choices and come to conclusions from highly complex material—when the books could and should just tell a good story. Sometimes on account of misguided efforts to be relevant, lessons are inappropriate. Macmillan's *The United States and Its Neighbors* errs more often on this account. Here, a truncated lesson on Benjamin Franklin stitched not very successfully to the issue of Philadelphia's civic improvement is supplemented by a special section on Julie Leirich, a contemporary citizen of Los Angeles "who started a program called The Loving Cup to help feed hungry people."

Very noble, yes, but couldn't space have been better used to recount more of Franklin's remarkable and varied accomplishments? By comparison, Houghton Mifflin's *America Will Be* includes a four-page story of Ben Franklin's childhood by the celebrated author and historian Jean Fritz.

Moreover, the Macmillan book falls apart toward the end. The last chapter on American history stresses political progress made by blacks and women presented in a banal and hortatory fashion. Jesse Jackson's contributions and ideas are noted, mainly "that Americans whose ancestors came from Africa be called 'African-Americans' rather than 'black.'" Geraldine Ferraro "proved that a woman could handle a tough campaign."

The final paragraph says that the "future will bring challenges we cannot begin to imagine. How you help meet those challenges will become part of America's unfinished story." It declines to mention such readily identifiable challenges as national and world debt, persistence of crime, racial conflict in cities, and a number of other disturbing issues well advertised to children and adults. Children are apt to come away thinking that the nation's principal challenge for the twenty-first century is to get more women and blacks into positions of political power.

Considering the entire elementary series marketed by each publisher, Houghton Mifflin offers books that are more clever and complex than the Macmillan series. Still, the Macmillan program is handsome and easy to use. Macmillan's content and lessons often fall short of the sometimes dazzling Houghton series, certainly in the primary grades; many teachers will find the Macmillan books more teachable. For educators happy or comfortable with the expanding environments method, who want teacher's editions that are fully scripted, who teach less able students, or who are themselves unversed in social studies, the Macmillan books are less threatening than the Houghton products.

The new Houghton Mifflin social studies series is more demanding than the Macmillan books. It is also more imaginative. The subject matter is gripping and original, the kind of content likely to appeal to children. Study exercises, visuals, and ancillaries are nuanced and subtle. Its texts deal with issues of gender, ethnicity, and multiculturalism in insightful ways, in balance with the larger scheme of history and society. The series comes with a supplementary reading list of Houghton Mifflin children's books. These books tie in to the basic texts, which in themselves devote considerable space to sources and stories.

Houghton Mifflin sets the standard for a new generation of social studies textbooks. It has challenged its competitors to revise and strengthen an ideal for elementary instruction, allowing textbooks and other instructional materials to be a linchpin of curricular improvement.

CALIFORNIA: What About the Junior High School Books?

The California curriculum veers far away from typical social studies coursework in sixth and seventh grade, covering ancient history and world history before returning to American history—1783 to 1914—in the eighth grade. With the exception of Houghton Mifflin and Scott, Foresman, no major company has tried to develop new books for these grades. Instead, publishers offer familiar titles and some new editions. Even Houghton Mifflin and Scott, Foresman have taken liberties with state mandates to make their books more marketable in the rest of the country.

Only one serious textbook outside the Houghton series has been submitted at the seventh grade level, Merrill's *Human Heritage*, designed for students up to the tenth grade level. *Human Heritage* is a good textbook, but some seventh graders will find it quite difficult. Therein lies the problem: many of the books coming to the California junior high school market in social studies are in fact created for high school students.

In the eighth grade adoption, a number of books were crafted for California, notably the final book in the Houghton Mifflin nine-volume program, and Scott, Foresman's new *America: The People and the Dream*. Both are excellent in comparison to books of the recent past. Houghton Mifflin offers a conceptually fascinating and elegantly designed book that will appeal to able students and teachers. It covers material from pre-Columbian America to the present. Yet it concentrates on the nineteenth century and early twentieth century—and does so very well.

America: The People and the Dream contains some magnificent, original lessons. The writing is lively. The only objectionable thing about the book is its expensive holographic cover, a triumph of glitz. Scott, Foresman considers the book a high school text; it will be a very hard read for many eighth graders. Holt Rinehart has also brought a new book to market by John Garraty. Garraty is also the author of *American History*, a venerable eighth grade textbook. The new book, *The Story of America to 1914*, the first volume of a two-volume high school book, is 966 pages. It is full of material simply beyond the grasp of eighth graders. By comparison, Garraty's older and simpler book, *American History*, is more appropriate and considerate to its audience.

Prentice Hall has brought two old junior high school histories, *The American Nation* and *American Spirit*, to the adoption. Each bears new copyrights but is identical in content to the same titles that were on the market in the 1980s. Globe has also entered the contest with a new edition of *Exploring American History*. Like Prentice Hall, Globe is a Simon & Schuster company, but it specializes in easy readers for less able and literate students.

Exploring American History is easy to read compared to the other books reviewed here. But its writing is wooden, and a disturbing number of typographical and index errors can be found. Moreover, trying to be sensitive to groups, the book engages in gender and ethnic baroque. A photograph highlights a woman miner in the 1849 California goldfields. Slave or contemporary leader, blacks are African-Americans, and in places, the book's lessons fan a victim mentality and cult of racial separatism. The entry to Native Americans in the index is about six times longer than the entry for the Revolutionary War. And the book refers to Indians from Pocahontas to the California mission dwellers as Native Americans on every occasion, doing no service to its modest literary qualities.

Here is a representative passage: "Pocahontas is reported to have saved John Smith's life twice. The English rewarded Pocahontas's kindness by kidnapping her. They held her as a hostage to prevent Native Americans from attacking Jamestown. A hostage is a person held prisoner until certain demands are met."

SOCIAL STUDIES BOOKS IN THE PRIMARY GRADES: A Failed Genre

By A. Guy Larkins

Social studies textbooks for children in the primary grades are a disaster area of instructional materials. If we consider the leading programs used around the nation, employing the vaunted expanding environments convention in grades three and below, we find truly dreadful subject matter.

Families and *Friends*, published by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, are two typical early-level social studies books—one for kindergarten, the other for first grade. Bearing 1988 copyright dates, they are virtual clones of the texts for children in the primary grades available from Silver Burdett and Scott, Foresman. Like their competitors, *Families* and *Friends* neither inform nor inspire. Children already possess information on the topics these books purport to teach—or soon will, even without formal instruction.

Such primary grade texts make portentous statements like "You belong to a family" or "Some families have two parents" or "Parents and children share the place where they live." This kind of juvenile sociology is not needed, useful, or at all interesting. Consider a random page from the Harcourt Brace second grade social studies textbook, this one called Neighborhoods:

> Many workers help people. Families pay some of these workers for their services. The communities' government pays other workers for their services.
>
> People everywhere pay money to the government. This money is called taxes. There are many kinds of taxes. You often pay taxes on things you buy.
>
> Your family pays many taxes. The taxes go to pay for the services you need in your neighborhood. Your taxes help pay people for their work.

Who can imagine subjecting eight-year-olds to this dead prose with subject matter more appropriate to an introductory course in macroeconomics? Well, social studies textbooks do, not only boring children with these lifeless abstractions but also depriving them of the wonderful tales, myths, legends, biographies, and more that might capture their interest.

Much textbook content at the lower elementary level is inappropriate. Important or potentially moving topics are treated superficially. Controversies are sanitized, purged of any remote opportunity to give offense. Topics are described in arid language certain to stifle the imaginations of small children.

A good teacher could provide most of the lessons in *Families* and *Friends* without texts. For example, *Friends* contains lessons to teach children to use their senses, to share feelings, to recognize the importance of love, and to encourage helping others. Each of these lessons consists of a group of photographs on one page, followed by a worksheet. Children look at the photographs, talk about them, then do the assignment. Ways exist to deliver these lessons that are far less expensive and more powerful than through individual textbooks for each child.

Teachers may find some of the content silly or slightly humiliating, like the exercise to meet "our school friends," including the custodian, the teacher, and the principal. Doesn't it make more sense for a class of seven-year-olds to get out of their seats, march down the hall, and meet these folks, rather than read about them in a textbook? Similarly, it may be important for children to appreciate how everyone is unique. But instead of looking at a textbook illustrating individual differences, wouldn't it be better for them to look at their own classmates?

These texts reflect the progressive idea that children should first study the social world that is near at hand, starting with the family and expanding to include the neighborhood and community, which are conventional second grade topics in this "expanding environments" approach. Then, according to custom, comes state, national, and world history in the higher elementary grades. For those who accept this dubious idea, it seems obvious that children should study their *own* families, schools, and neighborhoods, not the staged ones portrayed in a text.

Friends includes lessons on plants and animals, perhaps because trees and horses have economic value and economics is a social

science. By this rationale, virtually any content is fair game for social studies. Even if we believe that essential knowledge for young children includes the fact that firewood comes from trees and that horses eat hay, teachers hardly need textbooks to convey this information.

In presenting skills practice for the concepts alike and different, *Families* asks children to differentiate color and shape among such things as houses, balls, cars, tools, hands, eyes, and mouths. *Friends* continues the lesson for alike and different—the kindergarten lesson must not be very powerful, since it has to be repeated in first grade—and for other basic concepts such as up and down, left and right, and first, next, and last. These bear no special relation to social studies and can be readily taught without a textbook by any competent teacher.

Two units toward the end of *Families* about the United States and the world are simply tacked on. Subjects within these units are related in only the weakest and most trivial sense. One lesson, entitled "How Our Flag Is Made," literally shows how it is made—with sewing machines, strips of cloth, and thread. Four out of the twenty pages in the world unit are devoted to "Horses Around the World," including rocking horses and merry-go-round horses.

The content of such primary-level books seems arbitrary and trivial. Important topics are treated superficially as in the case of four biographies of great Americans, each dispatched in twenty words. Books like *Friends* "teach" children that people can have fun, that we need food, water, clothes, and homes, and that people go places in cars and airplanes. *Families* even tells us that we learn to read in school, that some children ride the school bus, and that the school has a secretary and a librarian. Please!

These Harcourt Brace books are not egregious examples; they are representative fare. The same sort of language and subject matter is to be found in other primary-level social studies texts. (Reads Silver Burdett's *Communities and Their Needs*, another book for second graders: "All people have needs. Needs are things that people must have to live. There are certain things that people cannot do without. Everyone must have food to eat.")

School districts waste money each of the thousands of times they purchase such books. Why not use that money to buy some really good story books for teachers to share during "reading aloud" time? I bet kids would learn more; they could hardly learn less.

How might primary social studies be improved? The stranglehold of the expanding environments rationale on the primary grades must be destroyed. Much of the vacuous, redundant, trivial content in texts is attributable to the organizing sequence of family, neighborhood, and community. We need to adopt lively stories of heroes and villains, of triumphs and adventures that will stir the emotions of young children. More than the near, young children probably need to learn about the far: the foreign, exotic, mysterious places well removed from their homes and localities that will spur their curiosity and interest.

I believe that social studies is worth doing in all grades. But it is not worth doing in the primary grades with the texts that currently dominate the market. I was taught some decades ago that children need concrete, vivid experiences in order to learn, and I still believe it. Authors of primary texts seem doggedly determined to violate that maxim. I would rather eliminate the subject of social studies from the kindergarten to third grade than use expanding environments textbooks such as *Families, Friends, Neighborhoods, Communities and Their Needs*, and so on.

A. Guy Larkins is professor of social science education at The University of Georgia.

Environmental concerns have grown intense in schools today. Here is one lesson for second graders:

> Many towns have a special place to dump trash. It is called a landfill.
>
> Some trash is dumped on flat ground. Then the landfill makes a hill. Sometimes trash is dumped into a hollow or a low place in the ground.
>
> A bulldozer drives over the trash to make it flat. Then the trash is covered with dirt. More trash is dumped on top of the dirt. Then more dirt is put on the trash.
>
> —from *Neighborhoods*

60

WHEN ETHNIC STUDIES ARE UN-AMERICAN

By Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.

"What then is the American, this new man?" a French immigrant asked two centuries ago. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur gave the classic answer to his own question. "He is an American, who, leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds.... Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of man."

The conception of America as a transforming nation, banishing old identities and creating a new one, prevailed through most of American history. It was famously reformulated by Israel Zangwill, an English writer of Russian Jewish origin, when he called America "God's crucible, the great melting pot where all the races of Europe are melting and re-forming." Most people who came to America expected to become Americans. They wanted to escape a horrid past and to embrace a hopeful future. Their goals were deliverance and assimilation.

Thus Crèvecoeur wrote his *Letters from an American Farmer* in his acquired English, not in his native French. Thus immigrants reared in other tongues urged their children to learn English as speedily as possible. German immigrants tried for a moment to gain status for their language, but the effort got nowhere. The dominant culture was Anglo-Saxon and, with modification and enrichment, remained Anglo-Saxon.

The melting pot was one of those metaphors that turned out only to be partly true, and recent years have seen an astonishing repudiation of the whole conception. Many Americans today righteously reject the historic goal of "a new race of man." The contemporary ideal is not assimilation but ethnicity. The escape from origins has given way to the search for "roots." "Ancient prejudices and manners"—the old-time religion, the old-time diet—have made a surprising comeback.

These developments portend a new turn in American life. Instead of a transformative nation with a new and distinctive identity, America increasingly sees itself as preservative of old identities. We used to say *e pluribus unum*. Now we glorify *pluribus* and belittle *unum*. The melting pot yields to the Tower of Babel.

The new turn has had marked impact on the universities. Very little agitates academia more these days than the demands of passionate minorities for revision of the curriculum: in history, the denunciation of Western civilization courses as cultural imperialism; in literature, the denunciation of the "canon," the list of essential books, as an instrumentality of the existing power structure.

A recent report by the New York State Commissioner of Education's Task Force on Minorities luridly describes "African Americans, Asian Americans, Puerto Ricans/Latinos and Native Americans" as "victims of an intellectual and educational oppression." The "systematic bias toward European culture and its derivatives," the report claims, has "a terribly damaging effect on the psyche of young people of African, Asian, Latino and Native American descent"—a doubtful assertion for which no proof is vouchsafed.

Of course teachers of history and literature should give due recognition to women, black Americans, Indians, Hispanics and other groups who were subordinated and ignored in the high noon of male Anglo-Saxon dominance. In recent years they have begun belatedly to do so. But the cult of ethnicity, pressed too far, exacts costs—as, for example, the current pressure to teach history and literature not as intellectual challenges but as psychological therapy.

There is nothing new, of course, about the yearnings of excluded groups for affirmations of their own historical and cultural dignity. When Irish-Americans were thought beyond the pale, their spokesmen responded much as spokesmen for blacks, Hispanics and others respond today. Professor John V. Kelleher, for many years Harvard's distinguished Irish scholar, once recalled his first exposure to Irish-American history—"turgid little essays on the fact that the Continental Army was 76% Irish, or that many of George Washington's closest friends were nuns and priests, or that Lincoln got the major ideas for the

Second Inaugural Address from the Hon. Francis P. Mageghegan of Alpaca, New York, a pioneer manufacturer of cast-iron rosary beads." John Kelleher called this "the there's-always-an-Irishman-at-the-bottom-of-it-doing-the-real-work approach to American history."

Fortunately most Irish-Americans disregarded their spokesmen and absorbed the American tradition. About 1930, Kelleher said, those "turgid little essays began to vanish from Irish-American papers." He added, "I wonder whose is the major component in the Continental Army these days?" The answer, one fears, is getting to be blacks, Jews, and Hispanics.

There is often artificiality about the attempts to use history to minister to psychological needs. When I encounter black insistence on inserting Africa into mainstream curricula, I recall the 1956 presidential campaign. Adlai Stevenson, for whom I was working, had a weak record on civil rights in America but was a champion of African nationalism. I suggested to a group of sympathetic black leaders that maybe if Stevenson talked to black audiences about Africa, he could make up for his deficiencies on civil rights. My friends laughed and said that American blacks couldn't care less about Africa. That is no longer the case; but one can't escape the feeling that present emotions are more manufactured than organic.

Let us by all means teach women's history, black history, Hispanic history. But let us teach them as history, not as a means of promoting group self-esteem. I don't often agree with Gore Vidal, but I liked his remark the other day: "What I hate is good citizenship history. That has wrecked every history book. Now we're getting 'The Hispanics are warm and joyous and have brought such wonder into our lives,' you know, and before them the Jews, and before them the blacks. And the women. I mean, cut it out!"

Novelists, moralists, politicians, fabulators can go beyond the historical evidence to tell inspiring stories. But historians are custodians of professional standards. Their objective is critical analysis, accuracy and objectivity, not making people feel better about themselves.

Heaven knows how dismally historians fall short of their ideals; how sadly our interpretations are dominated and distorted by unconscious preconceptions; how obsessions of race and nation blind us to our own bias. All historians may in one way or another mythologize history. But the answer to bad history is not "good citizenship history"—more bad history written from a different viewpoint. The answer to bad history is better history.

The ideological assault in English departments on the "canon" as an instrument of political oppression implies the existence of a monolithic body of work designed to enforce the "hegemony" of a class or race or sex. In fact, most great literature and much good history are deeply subversive in their impact on orthodoxies. Consider the American canon: Emerson, Whitman, Melville, Hawthorne, Thoreau, Mark Twain, Henry Adams, William and Henry James, Holmes, Dreiser, Faulkner. Lackeys of the ruling class? Agents of American imperialism?

Let us by all means learn about other continents and cultures. But, lamentable as some may think it, we inherit an American experience, as America inherits a European experience. To deny the essentially European origins of American culture is to falsify history.

We should take pride in our distinctive inheritance as other nations take pride in their distinctive inheritances. Certainly there is no need for Western civilization, the source of the ideas of individual freedom and political democracy to which most of the world now aspires, to apologize to cultures based on despotism, superstition, tribalism and fanaticism. Let us abjure what Bertrand Russell called the fallacy of "the superior virtue of the oppressed."

Of course we must teach the Western democratic tradition in its true proportions—not as a fixed, final and complacent orthodoxy, intolerant of deviation and dissent, but as an ever-evolving creed fulfilling its ideals through debate, self-criticism, protest, disrespect and irreverence, a tradition in which all groups have rights of heterodoxy and opportunities for self-assertion. It is a tradition that has empowered people of all nations and races. Little can have a more "terribly damaging effect on the psyche" than for educators to

tell young blacks and Hispanics and Asians that it is not for them.

Belief in one's own culture does not mean disdain for other cultures. But one step at a time: No culture can hope to ingest other cultures all at once, certainly not before it ingests its own. After we have mastered our own culture, we can explore the world.

If we repudiate the quite marvelous inheritance that history has bestowed on us, we invite the fragmentation of our own culture into a quarrelsome spatter of enclaves, ghettos and tribes. The bonds of cohesion in our society are sufficiently fragile, or so it seems to me, that it makes no sense to strain them by encouraging and exalting cultural and linguistic apartheid. The rejection of the melting pot points the republic in the direction of incoherence and chaos.

In the twenty-first century, if present trends hold, non-whites in the U.S. will begin to outnumber whites. This will bring inevitable changes in the national ethos but not, one must hope, at the expense of national cohesion. Let the new American forswear the cult of ghettoization and agree with Crèvecoeur, as with most immigrants in the two centuries since, that in America "individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of man."

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., is Albert Schweitzer professor of the humanities at the City University of New York. This article is reprinted from *The Wall Street Journal* with permission of the author.

SOCIAL STUDIES TEXTBOOKS: A View From the Publishers

When talking privately with textbook publishers, we are occasionally struck by their candor. In spite of the textbook industry's intense secrecy and defensiveness, those who produce school texts sometimes reiterate the thoughts of their critics.

Publishers are especially sensitive to the needs of elementary-level teachers. They know the teacher profile. On average, she is 42 years old. She has had little or no formal training in history or the social sciences. She tried the fads of the 1970s and 1980s and they didn't work. She teaches social studies two hours a week. An estimated 90 percent of her teaching in social studies is text-driven, almost entirely through an annotated teacher's edition. And so much depends on appearances. "What the book looks like is more important than what it says. Teachers give a book the thumb test. If it's too hard, too easy, that's it," says a former sales representative for the Texas market.

All publishers agree on the importance and influence of schoolbooks. Today, mass-market social studies textbooks come very close to being a *de facto* national curriculum. Providing an organized sequence of ideas and information, they structure teaching and learning. How texts are created, selected, and used then does much to standardize what is taught and learned in elementary and secondary schools from Los Angeles to Boston. Moreover, teachers are extremely respectful of these materials. They assume that learned researchers exercise extreme care to produce canonical tomes.

Barbara Flynn, an editor at Scott, Foresman, made the publishers' case recently in an issue of the *International Journal of Social Education*. Like her colleagues, Flynn notes that the "importance of textbooks can hardly be exaggerated. They are the main source of information for students in a classroom. They are the bedrock on which the nation's teachers build their lesson plans."

She argues with some cause that textbooks are a reflection, not a cause, of America's educational difficulties. "Textbook programs reflect the needs and wishes of our customers—the teachers," says Flynn. "In publishing, as in many other businesses, what the customer wants, the customer gets." As a result, she implies, publishers are obliged not to have any deep convictions about what their books will contain and look like. They must ignore that in the case of textbooks, the actual consumers are children who are being educated, and that the stakes of quality extend well beyond the marketing of appealing hamburgers or video games.

Flynn makes the important point that textbook content is driven by state and local mandates, nowadays hyperattentive to issues of gender, race, and ethnic pluralism, often

codified into correlational analysis and scope and sequence, certainly incorporated into official legal compliance lists. "It is a misconception that publishers seek to 'accommodate'...interests. We satisfy curriculum and teacher needs," she notes. "Only when a special-interest group is effective with curriculum makers do you see the results in textbooks."

Publishers are in a bind. They face the full spectrum of organized groups who want favorable and prominent treatment in textbooks: Pentecostals and Moslems, environmentalists and nuclear disarmers, feminist and ethnic activists, anti-junk food crusaders and animal rights organizations—each lobbies hard to have a place in social education, potentially slighting or antagonizing another group.

These advocates are rarely trained scholars; instead, they bring to the debate strong opinions and unyielding views. Publishers cannot afford to ignore such pressures. It can be argued that they have been all too willing to ignore textbook quality in their desire to keep their competitive edge and placate their most voluble critics. Unfortunately, Flynn sidesteps the fact that most textbook editors are reflexively responsive and sympathetic to some kinds of advocacy and allergic to others.

Pentecostals and Moslems, environmentalists and nuclear disarmers, feminist and ethnic activists, anti-junk food crusaders and animal-rights organizations — each lobbies hard...

Flynn reminds us that finding good authors for a textbook is difficult: "If one is eminent in a field, that makes him or her desirable. The truth is, however, that eminence is rarely accompanied by interest. Writing high school textbooks does not help professors in their careers."

What serious writer would be willing to submit to readability formulas? she asks. These formulas, which purport to gauge the level of difficulty of textual prose, are of much concern to those who select textbooks. Publishers—who may not like the gauges—abide by their clients' demands. According to Flynn, "we understand, better than authors, what background—or lack of it—students bring to the text. We rewrite to make concepts clearer, to make references more understandable. We take complex ideas and break them down to their component parts."

It is true that complex ideas are broken down, but the rest of this statement is debatable. The way textbooks are produced leaves little room for literary nuance and exposes serious authors to multiple indignities. There are no incentives for professors to contribute to texts except financial ones: so more than one academic has put his or her name to a book in order to help with the mortgage or put a shiny new Jeep Cherokee in the garage. These authors act as editorial consultants and often go on the road as sales people.

Flynn does not explain that the real writing of schoolbooks is typically done by anonymous staffers working in development houses and production companies, subcontractors laboring under the direction of an in-house text editor. Unlike the college market, where authors write their own books, schoolbook authors have little or no control over their product. A few leading historians—Daniel Boorstin, John Garraty come to mind—have developed secondary-level texts, and have exerted considerable control over their books. Their activity shows in the high quality of the outcome. But such books are the exception.

In concluding her essay, Flynn hopes that student "imagination can be fired by the accomplishments of their ancestors. They can be inspired by the awesome fact that they are living off the ideas of dead women and men." This statement is stirring but not exactly correct, and it is redolent of the wishful thinking, presentmindedness, and politically correct expression applied by textbooks to historical reality.

Flynn maintains that social studies and especially history is considered the dullest of subjects by most teenagers. Adolescents are self- and now-oriented, she says. High school students are not "interested in a bunch of dead folks," she says. But the same thing might be said of some here-and-now social studies education professors and the textbook editors who oversee the content of texts.

NOTED WITH INTEREST

★ School librarians take note. Cobblestone Publishing, a boutique publisher based in Petersborough, New Hampshire, offers a delightful and informative magazine called *Cobblestone*, a monthly devoted to American history for ten- to twelve-year-olds. Each issue focuses on a particular theme. A recent issue, billed as "Taking Stock of Wall Street," includes an interview with a Wall Street analyst, articles on the history of *The Wall Street Journal* and the ticker-tape machine, and a board game called "Make a Million." Another issue, entitled "What Is History?," considers just that question, including thumbnail sketches of Herodotus, Edward Gibbon, Francis Parkman, and Barbara Tuchman. The same issue includes short reviews of favorite history books by children. Among these are George R. Stewart's classic, *The Pioneers Go West*, the story of an overland journey to California in 1844, and *My Brother Sam Is Dead*, the moving story of a boy whose brother is killed in the Revolutionary War. Cobblestone also publishes *Calliope*, a quarterly about classical civilizations, and *Faces*, a monthly about people and cultures, both also of high quality.

In an interview published in a recent issue of *Cobblestone*, the well-known children's book author Milton Meltzer was asked: "Why should young people study history?" This was his reply:

> History helps young people to develop a sense of shared humanity. It helps them to understand themselves and all those others outside their own skin. Through history, they learn how they are similar to and different from other people down through the ages and across all the continents. They see how false are the stereotypes of themselves and others. They grasp the differences between facts and guesses. They learn how complex are the forces that shape the world we know and live in. They see, too, that simple answers are often not good ones. And they realize that not every problem has a solution. They come to know how irrational, how accidental, are the turns in human affairs. And they appreciate the power of great ideas and of great character in history.
>
> ★

★ A close reading of current annual reports from major textbook publishers confirms that 1989 was a rough year for the industry, in spite of an 11 percent rise in school sales. Textbook publishing profits have declined from an estimated 19 to 20 percent three years ago to 10 to 13 percent, said the president of Macmillan, a company now owned by the British entrepreneur Robert Maxwell.

The most troubled of textbook companies, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, veered toward bankruptcy. HBJ wrote off $88 million last year, much of it in obsolete inventory, and sold at discount its popular Sea World properties. The company misjudged the market, it admitted in its report, underestimating the trend toward "literature-based" readers and texts. It is well known that its once potent textbook lines have grown stale and dated. The former leader in the industry faces a huge $1.6 billion debt and will have to divest further assets to remain solvent, according to most analysts. Its core business of school textbooks may go on the block, said some.

Paramount/Simon & Schuster, owner of Silver Burdett and Prentice Hall, also took losses on old stock. Revenues in its school group were up 23 percent; profits increased much less, mainly on account of rising costs. As the 1989 report put the situation, "companies felt the effects of higher marketing expenses, accompanied by demand for more frequent textbook revisions and free supplementary materials," known inelegantly in the trade as "freebies" and "giveaways."

Like other publishers, Simon & Schuster complains of the copyright craze that instantly dates textbooks: "In the past, a successful product customarily remained on the market for three to five years before revision or replacement," it reports. "This life cycle has shortened; educators now request more frequent revisions and added services."

In Houghton Mifflin's school division, sales increased slightly. About 70 percent of adopting school districts in California have selected a new Houghton reading series. (The company also has high hopes for a new social studies program with a 1991 copyright developed in line with California's curriculum.) Still, earnings declined, due to devel-

opment costs and selling expenses. It remains to be seen how profitable Houghton's reading and social studies series will be, and how well they will do nationally.

Reflecting common concerns, the Harcourt Brace annual report is ruefully eloquent on marketing excesses—including its own—during the 1980s: "Basic programs have become too large and therefore unwieldy; they are overly variegated and therefore textually redundant. As publishers became more and more attentive to the differing requirements, state by state, some textbook programs turned into concordances, in effect, annotated indexes including all that can be—but is not—taught in a particular grade. We are now curbing the gluttony which by habit or by accident over several years entered into relations between schools and publishers generally."

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SOCIAL STUDIES REVIEW

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A BULLETIN OF THE AMERICAN TEXTBOOK COUNCIL

Number 6 Fall 1990

THE MIDDLE EAST AND ISLAM

Late this summer, Iraq's invasion of Kuwait brought Middle Eastern affairs into prominence. Americans realized once again how little they know about the region's history, geography, and economics. Military movements from Beirut to Baghdad confuse them. Current Islamic upheavals and revolutionary unrest seem capricious and strange. Schoolbooks cannot be faulted for such broad ignorance. The problem extends well beyond classrooms and instructional materials.

The image of Islamic culture held by most Americans, even by educated ones, is an inaccurate one. Occasionally, it is unspeakably vulgar. A billboard bedecked in glitter for Donald Trump's Taj Mahal casino in Atlantic City is headlined "Open Sesame!" conflating Indian and Arabian tradition to promise lots of jackpots from generous slots.

Americans—secular and up-to-date—live in a very young nation. They have difficulty relating to cultures that clock their histories in millenia rather than decades. The relationship between religion and politics in Middle Eastern countries, where there is little separation of church and state, is very different from our own constitutional arrangement. Americans often have a hard time understanding the profound religiosity of the Islamic tradition, failing to take seriously belief in the lives of Muslims.

Many Muslims—who are squeamish about any representation of their world and faith that is less than flattering—find this disrespectful, even insulting. On the other hand, the negative image of the Arab world in the

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★

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

United States has reason and cause. Colonel Qaddafi and repeated acts of terrorism, the vagaries of OPEC and oil prices, Arab-Israeli wars, and the Salman Rushdie affair do little to promote a generous view toward the region or its inhabitants.

Much of what Europeans and Americans ordinarily think about the Muslim world has roots in nineteenth-century romanticism. Ingres' odalisques and Delacroix's fierce Arab warriors are well known. *The Arabian Nights* provides some lovely legends that even today American children learn and treasure, but these stories also include images of harems and flying carpets that can misrepresent actuality.

Certainly U.S. students should learn something about the Middle East. In this region, 60 percent of the world's known petroleum reserves are located. Islam is the world's most rapidly growing religion and after Christianity, the largest. This system of belief spreads from Indonesia to Morocco. Students should know, for example, that the religion's name is derived from the word *salam*, which means "peace," the kind of peace that comes from surrendering one's life to God.

Islam's origins make a fascinating story. It originated in the seventh century in what is today Saudi Arabia. The world into which the prophet Muhammad was born was barbaric, where the desert bedouin felt no obligation to anyone outside his tribe. In the leading city of Mecca, the society was chaotic; blood feuds stretched over generations. The time was ripe for a deliverer. What seemed to the Meccan nobility, the establishment of the time, to be pretentious spiritual claims of a camel driver turned into a serious revolutionary movement. Within years, Muhammad's followers captured the whole Arabian peninsula, and within a century, they had conquered the Near East, northern Africa, the Iberian peninsula, and had crossed the Pyrenees into France.

Only with Napoleon's conquest of Egypt and the British control of the Suez did European colonialism fully overwhelm the Islamic civilization. The American presence in Islamic lands dates from the rise of the oil industry and World War II. Today, as the leading Western power, the United States bears the brunt of Muslim enmity, an issue few textbooks dare explore.

The fall issue of the *Social Studies Review* opens with two major articles on the Middle East. The first, written by an Islamic scholar at the University of Chicago's venerable Oriental Institute, raises a number of sage points about the subject of Islam and how it should be taught. The second reviews world history textbooks, evaluating how competently they cover the region's past and present. It evaluates the quality of these books on Middle Eastern subjects in ancient, medieval, and modern history.

The *Review* also returns to a subject familiar to our readers. The heralded—and what now feels to be interminable—California social studies textbook adoption is finally drawing toward a close. The high jinks of interest groups lobbying in Sacramento preceding the final decisions by the state board of education provide a case study of textbook extremism, where advocates are all too willing to shout down those who disagree with their point of view. Our report reveals democracy at work, yes, but it also suggests that no history can satisfy those registering loud protests in behalf of their own *idées fixes*.

The American Textbook Council also has some good news. During the last few months we have received generous and needed support from the Richard Lounsbery Foundation, Earhart Foundation, and John M. Olin Foundation to help us publish and distribute forthcoming issues, so we can continue to provide crucial information to educators around the country who must decide what textbooks their schools will use and who more than ever need access to impartial, independent reviews. The task remains of paramount importance to the social studies curriculum.

With this issue we are also asking our readers to make a contribution to the *Social Studies Review*. A generous grant two years ago from the William H. Donner Foundation has enabled us to mail issues of the quarterly at no charge to the nation's leading educators, scholars, publishers, public officials, and the many others who want to advance good textbooks in social studies and other subjects. Your help will enable the Council to be a strong and independent voice for textbook reform.

ISLAMIC HISTORY: Problems and Ideals for Schools

By Fred M. Donner

For many reasons, Americans need to know something about the Muslim faith and the history of the Islamic world. Most obvious is Islam's prominence in the daily headlines. These news bulletins may refer to current crises, like the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, or to events of the recent past, like the fall of the Shah and the rise of the Islamic republic of Iran, or to continuing issues, like the Israeli-Palestine conundrum. In every case they suggest that it is in our political and economic self-interest to know what makes the Islamic world tick.

But there are deeper and more abiding reasons to understand Islam. First, it is one of the world's major religions, claiming the allegiance of about a billion people, that is, one-fifth of humanity. Second, Muslims and Islamic states have decisively affected world history. Third, Islam has interacted closely with Western civilization. Indeed, this interaction has been so close at times that it is fair to consider the Islamic tradition and the Western tradition as two variants on a number of common religious themes, including the concepts of monotheism, divine law, last judgment, and an afterlife.

In addition, Muslims are more numerous in the United States than they were a few decades ago, when knowledge of Islam could, perhaps, be relegated to the domain of specialists and ignored by the general population. Increasingly, however, Muslims have become more visible in all areas of the country and walks of life—some in their distinctive traditional garb. Mosques and Islamic centers are becoming familiar on the American landscape. Muslims are organizing themselves to claim rights as citizens and to project their point of view in politics. Unfortunately, most Americans lack even minimal knowledge of Islam. In its place one finds either total ignorance or, worse, widespread misconceptions, some of them age-old.

* * *

Most Muslims in principle applaud the decision to present more material on Islam and Islamic history. Nonetheless, their approval is constrained by their own strong views on how this material should be presented. They are above all concerned that Islam not be presented as an object of ridicule and that its teachings not be distorted by bias or stereotype. Such stereotypes have roots going back hundreds of years and continue even today. Muslims are also sensitive to the manner in which Muhammad is portrayed, viewing any perceived criticism of the Prophet's life or character as an attack on Islam itself.

Some Muslims are so sensitive about certain points that they may view even a fairly straightforward factual presentation as hostile. For example, they resent the suggestion that Islam is a "religion of violence," an image dating back to the Middle Ages in Western writings. This literature has presented the faith as "imposed by the sword," spread by military conquests in "holy wars," and forced on conquered opponents at the threat of "conversion or death." Those who have studied the subject know that such claims are either false or are so distorted as to constitute merely a caricature of Islam and the history of Muslim peoples.

For some Muslims, however, this nerve is so raw that any allusion to military activity on the part of Muhammad or the early Islamic community is interpreted as hostile. "You state that the Prophet Muhammad launched raids against Meccan caravans; this presents our Prophet as nothing more than a common robber," the incensed Muslim may complain, even though Islamic sources themselves offer ample documentation of the Prophet's raids, and even though silence on his military activities makes his consolidation of political power in Arabia, a decisive event in Islam's history, virtually incomprehensible.

Of course, one does not wish to overemphasize military episodes, but to eliminate such references altogether would simply be to replace the stereotype of a "religion of violence" with an apologetic view that Islam is an early form of pacifism. This is not the path to historical accuracy.

The teacher, then, must strive to take Muslims' justified sensitivities into account, without capitulating to them and rewriting the historical record in a misguided desire to compensate for past inaccuracies. Controver-

sial issues such as Islam's treatment of women, the status of non-Muslims in Islamic society, slavery, and the relationship of religious to political authority should not be ignored or sanitized. Precisely because they are so controversial, they offer the teacher the greatest opportunity truly to teach. Nothing is guaranteed to open students' eyes like dismantling misconceptions and exchanging honest differences of opinion.

Finally, lest we forget, Muslims differ among themselves on many issues, just as Christians do. The teacher, for example, who displays a work of Islamic art depicting an episode from the life of Muhammad may find that some Muslims will declare such an image blasphemous—even though the Muslim artist who drew it, the Muslim patron who commissioned it, and the Muslim collectors who preserved it over the centuries obviously did not consider it objectionable.

No one can hope to present the essence of "true Islam," since after all it is a matter of theological debate among Muslims. Ultimately, it is a matter of faith rather than objective reality. Instead, the teacher can try to be fair to the beliefs, aspirations, and actual practices of various Muslim communities in various times and places, as reflected in their history, their societies, their laws, and their works of literature and art.

What then should students learn about Islam and Islamic history? Obviously, there is no single answer, and every specialist would offer a different choice of basics. Nonetheless, a selection of basic themes and illuminating episodes might include the following:

1. *Geography.* As background, students need to know the physical and enthnographic features of the regions in which Islam has played a major role—particularly the Middle East and North Africa, but also much of Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and the Balkans. Just as a student of American history would have trouble understanding the significance of Sherman's March to the Sea if he thought Atlanta were in Massachusetts or Ohio, so the student of Islamic history will be lost without an idea of the location of such places as Mecca, Damascus, and Baghdad, not to mention Cairo, Istanbul, Delhi, Samarkand, Fez, and Cordoba. From the jungles and rice paddies of the Caspian coast of Iran to the high mountains of Anatolia or the Atlas, the terrain is varied, not a singular, endless desert inhabited by camel-herding nomads, a conventional image in the American mind.

2. *The Prophet Muhammad.* There is no better, or more essential, topic with which to introduce a unit on Islam than the life of Muhammad. First, Islam as we know it begins with Muhammad's preaching. Second, Islamic law is founded largely on Muhammad's actions and sayings, so millions of Muslims over the centuries have studied his life as a model for their own conduct. Third, it is a fascinating life story, which can be used to illuminate many tenets of the Islamic faith as well as some universal human themes.

Important topics include the question of God's revelations as Muhammad's main motivation; his courage in challenging the polytheism and materialism of his kinsmen in Mecca; his consolidation of power in Medina and the relationship of religion to politics in this process; his long struggle against, and ultimate victory, over Mecca; and his initiatives against outlying Arabian tribes toward the end of his life. Selected passages from the Koran (Qur'an) can help bring Muhammad's teachings to life.

3. *Beliefs and Practices.* Students should be introduced to the basic tenets of belief in Islam, including the Pillars of Wisdom, and the concept of Islamic law, which establishes norms for the believer's life conduct, sometimes in minute detail. The customs and traditions of Islam include many strict rituals and standards that cover diet, marriage, divorce, and enterprise. Through such study young people may begin to understand Islam as a way of life, and the study of different customs helps to illustrate differences between Islamic and Judeo-Christian culture.

4. *The Spread of Islam.* The early conquests, after the death of the Prophet in 632, are an historical brainteaser of the first order. How was a small Muslim community, based in a poor region, able to defeat the two great powers of the Near East in quick succession, driving one, the Byzantine empire, out of its strongholds in Syria, Egypt, and North Africa, and completely overthrowing the other, the

Sasanian Persian empire? What motivated the conquerors—religious zeal, or desire for booty, captives, and new land? Above all, how was it possible for the tiny elite of Muslims to have such a decisive long-term effect on the vast areas they conquered?

The early conquests, however, have sometimes been used to illustrate Islam as a "violent religion," so teachers should stress that what was being spread by the sword was not the Islamic faith itself but the political dominance of a new Islamic state. Most of the peoples subjugated by the Muslims in this first phase of expansion were Christians, Jews, or Zoroastrians, who were allowed to practice their own religions and to regulate their own communal affairs, in exchange for payment of a tax to the Muslim authorities. The mass of conversions that made Near Eastern and North African people overwhelmingly Muslim occurred gradually over the next several centuries and owed far more to economic and social advantages, and perhaps to the simplicity and attractiveness of Islam itself, than they did to outright coercion.

5. *The Brilliance of Islamic Civilization.* Students should be made aware that Islam inspired a rich civilization that was at its height in the seventh through fifteenth centuries, at a time when European civilization was at best rude. Muslim theologians, jurists, mystics, and philosophers grappled with the great questions of good and evil, human responsibility, social order, and the meaning of life and death. Muslim mathematicians, physicians, and engineers made advances in these fields that Europe would later borrow freely. Muslim poets and writers penned magnificent expressions of love and hate, joy and sorrow, hope and fear, and the foibles of humanity. Muslim architects, artisans, and artists created works of astonishing beauty, from illustrated Qur'ans to the Taj Mahal.

6. *The Turkish and Mongol Incursions.* In the eleventh century, pressured by movements of other nomadic peoples and drawn by increasing political chaos in the central Islamic lands, Turks began to intervene in the politics of the Iranian plateau. They seized control of Iran and Iraq and later swept through Asia Minor, wresting it from the Byzantine empire and absorbing many of its indigenous inhabitants. Mongols likewise moved south across Eurasia into the Indian subcontinent. Turks and Mongols brought with them new attitudes toward political legitimacy and statecraft. The old Iranian-Islamic approach to government was hybridized with Turko-Mongol traditions, resulting in a greater militarization of government and a greater emphasis on the autocracy of rulers. This influence helped shape the practice of governments in many later Muslim states, including the great empires that represent the culmination of Islamic state-building, from the Ottomans in Asia Minor and the Balkans to the Moguls in India.

7. *The Almoravids.* Another story helps to clarify the reach of Islamic culture in Africa and Europe in the Middle Ages. In the eleventh century Islamic revivalism swept over northwest Africa, present-day Mauretania, Morocco, and Algeria, imposing on all Muslims strict observance of Islamic rituals and law. These Almoravids gained great power. The most powerful Muslim leader in the Islamic West, the Almoravid Ibn Tashfin, based in Marrakesh, was invited by the rulers of Islamic Spain to defend them against Christian attacks led by Alfonso VI of Castile. Ibn Tashfin not only repelled the Christian advance but also absorbed all of Islamic Spain into the Almoravid domain. The unification of Muslim North Africa and Spain allowed the highly sophisticated Islamic culture of Spain to flow freely into North Africa, which until then had been a cultural backwater.

8. *Islam and the West.* Islamic states found themselves in contact, and often in conflict, with European states from about the time of the Crusades up to mercantile, colonial, and imperial ventures of the modern era. Religious rivalry was often associated with political competition; so, too, was the inevitable exchange of concepts and practices that both sides found stimulating and often provocative. Tracing the fate of Islamic countries at the hands of European imperialism is particularly important, because it offers a backdrop against which one can understand many attitudes current in the Islamic world today.

This influence ultimately led to contempo-

rary Islamic culture, including secular pragmatism that attempts to modernize by adopting whatever European technologies and institutions work, particularly military ones; a liberal reform movement that strives to transform Islamic society from the ground up through constitutionalism and representative government; a virulent ethnic nationalist movement that denies the idea that Islam can truly mobilize a society to resist the West; and a fundamentalism that ascribes the weakness of Islamic states to corruption and deviation from the true God-given ideals of pristine Islam, thereby rejecting the West and all its works.

The battle for control of the Suez Canal illustrates this conflict between the West and Islam. Egyptians long resented the canal, which was built at backbreaking cost to them but long benefited European interests over their own. Fittingly, the canal was the central venue in the final act of an epic imperialism-versus-nationalism play—the Suez crisis of 1956—when Gamal Abdel Nasser ended the British financial and political role in Egypt. Viewing Nasser's ultimate victory in the crisis in the context of the canal's history should also make clearer why Nasser, and similar nationalist heroes, have for all their shortcomings been hailed as deliverers.

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SOURCE MATERIALS

Where is a teacher to find instructional materials that complement textbooks and enhance study of Islam and the Middle East? Teachers may turn to a variety of resources, but since most receive little training in history, much less in Middle Eastern studies, few will feel comfortable doing so without guidance. Local Islamic centers offer a selection of materials. Some of these are excellent, but most tend to proselytize rather than inform. They focus on Islam as a religion rather than on the broader history of the Islamic world, stressing the life of Muhammad at the expense of other historical subjects.

The International Institute of Islamic Thought (Box 669, Herndon, VA 22070) is another source of materials. This scholarly organization can provide teachers with a number of suitable publications for teacher training and classroom use. Among these are *The Islamic Tradition* and *Islam*.

The Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia (601 New Hampshire Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20037) also distributes a useful booklet on Islam and can provide extensive materials on the country, as can the embassies of all Islamic countries from Mauretania to Indonesia.

For the primary grades, teachers might consider Anthony Kamm, *The Story of Islam* in the Cambridge Books for Children series. The Middle East Institute (1761 N Street, N.W. Washington, DC 20036) distributes a pamphlet entitled *A Century of Islam in America* by Yvonne Y. Haddad.

If requested on school stationery, *A Curriculum Resource Guide on the Middle East* is available free of charge from the Middle East Studies Program at Fordham University (113 West 60th Street, New York, NY 10023). This invaluable source provides lesson plans on a large number of subjects, a critical bibliography of useful books, and addresses of embassies.

Teachers may turn to other government-funded centers for Middle Eastern Studies situated at major American research universities. Each is mandated to offer outreach programs to increase awareness and knowledge of the Middle East, including workshops for teachers, often at little or no cost. They can provide the information on historical, geographical, and ethnographic subjects that the Muslim community, with its more strictly religious focus, may not dwell on or omit altogether.

Such centers exist at the University of Arizona, California at Berkeley, California at Los Angeles, Chicago, Columbia, Harvard, Michigan, New York University, Princeton, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah, and Washington.

TEXTBOOKS AND THE MIDDLE EAST: A Review

When students come to the Middle East for the first time, it will typically be in lessons inside a sixth grade social studies textbook. They will be introduced to Mesopotamia and the Fertile Crescent, that is, to the ancient Sumerian and Babylonian settlements considered the foundations of organized civilization. Students will also be introduced to early Jewish and Egyptian cultures. They will encounter Islam, the Crusades, and, perhaps, the building of the Suez Canal. Almost certainly, their encounter will be brief.

The region's past and present will likely be covered in a few pages or a few chapters. It will not be much of a story. The reason is not because textbooks purposefully shortchange the subject. Encyclopedic efforts at inclusion make the abbreviation of every subject in world history necessary.

Some texts do very poorly with the Middle East. Consider one standard text for sixth graders, Scott, Foresman's *Our World Yesterday and Today*, a book that does not emphasize history, since it takes an eclectic world-around-us social studies approach. This book dispenses with Islam in three pages and one lesson. Its superficial and telegraphic style can be of no interest to eleven-year-olds or anybody else.

Here is an excerpt: "Muhammad was an Arab. That is, he spoke the Arabic language and lived on the Arabian Peninsula as Arabs still do today. Find the Arabian Peninsula on the map on page 169." About Islamic culture and scientific contributions, it says in full: "The Arabs came up with new ideas as well, in medicine, mathematics, astronomy, and other sciences. They also wrote books on geography and history." Silver Burdett & Ginn's *The Eastern Hemisphere Yesterday and Today*, also shortchanges Middle Eastern history, taking up Islam mainly within a brief unit keyed to the fact that Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all originated in the region.

A more adequate treatment of the Middle East can be found in Macmillan's sixth grade text called *Eastern Hemisphere*. After a thorough introduction to the Fertile Crescent, the book considers Islam with some agility. *Eastern Hemisphere* includes a condensed story of Ali Baba from *The Arabian Nights*. It spends three pages describing the advances of Islamic culture, from navigation to medicine. It introduces the Koran and the Five Pillars of Faith, Prayer, Alms, Fasting, and Pilgrimage. In an interesting critical thinking question—though perhaps well beyond the analytical powers of sixth graders—the book asks students to contrast the Five Pillars of Islam with the Ten Commandments. (How such a question will sit with aggressive "wall of separation" activists is another question.)

Eastern Hemisphere has one infuriating vice. It repeatedly allows its text to be subsumed by diversionary lessons and exercises, many of them trendy and topical, placed disconcertingly at points that disrupt the flow of historical narrative. Thus, the Code of Hammurabi—the famous system of laws recorded around 1780 B.C.—is followed by "Protecting the Environment," in which an American "senior citizen" named Ray Proffitt is presented as a one-man environmental hero. Proffitt "has declared war against polluters in the Delaware River." According to the book, the linkage between Mesopotamia and Ray Proffitt is the statement: "The people of Mesopotamia knew that the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers were a valuable source of life." This is a conceptual reach, and is all too typical of *Eastern Hemisphere*'s presentism.

The Houghton Mifflin series handles Islam in its seventh grade text called *Across the Centuries*. Since this series covers world history over a two-year period, it can explore its subject in more detail. Mesopotamia is treated in the sixth grade book called *A Message from Ancient Days*. *Across the Centuries* devotes a 56-page unit to Islam, taking time to stop for four pages and tell of the Voyage of Sinbad the Sailor.

Despite the thoroughness of Houghton Mifflin's coverage of the Middle East, problems present themselves, especially in the ambitious unit on Islam. The fragmented format divides subject matter to such a degree that the unit is hard to follow. Some material on the Umayyads and Abbasids seems esoteric and beyond the grasp—or interest—of a

seventh grader. As in *Eastern Hemisphere*, history stops to incorporate a lesson on "Origins of Sports and Games," another well-intentioned effort to add spice to the subject, but the only connection to Islamic culture is that Abbasid rulers enjoyed recreations like falconry and backgammon. A simpler narrative approach would have been welcome.

On the other hand, it is hard to see why militant Muslims in California have objected to *Across the Centuries*' historiography, which they claim is demeaning. Some of them cite as evidence of "insensitivity" a nineteenth-century print from the British Library carrying the caption, "This Arab warrior displays his ability with a sword to instill fear in the heart of the enemy." This is admittedly an ill-selected illustration, but some of the California protesters might consider media coverage of poison gas warfare insensitive too.

* * *

Many students encounter the Middle East a second time before they graduate from high school. A superior treatment of the subject in tenth through twelfth grade world history textbooks is to be found in Scott, Foresman's *History and Life*. Two other current texts, Prentice Hall's *The Pageant of World History* and Houghton Mifflin's *History of the World*, offer less satisfactory histories of the region, its religion, and its current affairs.

The Pageant of World History compresses the history of Byzantium and Islam into one chapter. *History of the World* is organized in an annoying way, separating the rise of Islam from Islamic civilization in such a way as to be confusing. The writing in *History of the World* is inferior. The book employs dutiful and dry prose, intent on packing everything in or at least mentioning everything along the way. *History of the World*'s editors have created a "learning tool" and compendium; the flair and richer writing of *History and Life* is absent.

History and Life devotes two full chapters to Islam, handling the subject in an appealing way. It features a sidebar on historic calendars and an excerpt from the Koran. This book includes much information on the spread of Muslim trade. The reader learns, for example, that words such as *check*, *traffic*, *tariff*, and *caravan* came into the English language through the Arabic language, or that a sophisticated banking system developed and operated in the Islamic world three centuries before it did in Western Europe. The reader also learns of Islamic conquests in West Africa from the eighth century, as traders were drawn south of the Sahara by the gold produced in West African mines. This treatment may not please Afrocentric revisionists, who believe the medieval civilizations of West Africa were influenced by nothing not native in origin, but *History and Life* does cover African history with a care that should make most historians happy. The writing can be excellent. Its introduction to the rise of Islam begins:

> A busy spider spun her silver web across the mouth of a cave that hid three men. When the captain of the pursuing war party neared the arch, he saw the web and called to his men. "No one has entered here. The web is as good as a seal. Search elsewhere." As their enemies rode away, Muhammad ibn Abdullah, his friend, Abu Bakr, and their guide wiped the sweat from their faces and said a prayer of thanksgiving for their tiny savior. Only when they were certain the men had gone did they lead their camels out. Although the city of Medina was their destination, they rode off in the opposite direction, winding through the hot Arabian desert to throw the hunters off the trail. Ten days later the three tired men rode into Medina, their journey safely ended. The year was 622, and the journey was the Hijra (Hegira).

The Mongol invasion of India six hundred years later is a powerful story with great natural appeal for high school students. The story of Genghis Khan's descendants is astonishing, not well known, and it really happened. *History and Life* minces no words:

> The Turko-Mongol leader Timur, or Tamerlane, one of history's cruelest conquerors, invaded India. Although a Muslim, Tamerlane's general policy was to keep both his Muslim and non-Muslim neighbors weak compared to his own strong Central Asian empire. After destroying all the territories and cities

within a 500-mile radius of his Samarkand capital, Tamerlane turned toward Delhi. In 1398 Tamerlane sacked and gutted Delhi, massacring everyone except the artisans and women who were carried off to Samarkand as slaves. It was said that "for two whole months not a bird moved a wing in the city."

Compare the two other books on Tamerlane. *The Pageant of World History* says, "Tamerlane was a Mongol warrior who came from Asiatic Russia. He and his conquering horsemen swept across Asia, looting and killing. Although Tamerlane was a Muslim, it did not stop him from attacking Delhi. In 1398, the city was destroyed. Thousands of people—both Hindu and Muslim—were killed." This passage is almost identical to one in *History of the World*, which covers the subject by saying: "In the late 1300's, the conqueror Tamerlane, who claimed descent from Genghis Khan, led his Mongol armies through Central and Western Asia. Although he was a devout Muslim himself, Tamerlane laid waste to the great Muslim cities of Asia. In 1398 his forces sacked Delhi and killed or enslaved all of its people."

Both of these passages are so brief that the crucial and interesting fact that a devout Muslim would attack the Delhi sultanate and other Muslim centers for geopolitical reasons is never explained, leading to student incomprehension rather than understanding.

To give another example, *History and Life* takes time to explicate the complicated, misunderstood, and potentially inflammatory concept of *jihad*:

> The spread of Islam has been linked with *jihad*, an Arabic word which means "struggle," but which is usually translated "holy war." The early Muslims took very seriously their responsibility to convert everyone to Islam and considered the struggle to convert people a "holy war" against polytheists and those who had no faith at all. In modern times *jihad* has been distorted by certain Muslims who tend to call any religious or political movement a "holy war."

The passage goes on to say: "Religious fervor was only one reason for Arab expansion. Another reason was a population explosion. The Arabian deserts could not support large numbers of people."

By comparison, explanations of *jihad* in the other books are superficial or wrong. *The Pageant of World History* says, not elegantly, "One sure way of getting into paradise, however, was to die in a *jihad*, or a holy war, against non-Muslims. Because of this belief Muslim fighters were courageous warriors." *History of the World* is even more simplistic. To explain the idea, the book states, "Mohammed preached a holy war, or *jihad* against nonbelievers," and moves on.

History and Life is slightly sketchy on the subject of European imperialism in North Africa and the Middle East during the nineteenth century. On the other hand, it treats Middle Eastern affairs since 1945 with dexterity and thoroughness. The place of Israel and the irresolution of the Palestinian problem are aptly covered. The book notes the religious and ethnic diversity of the region and the conflicts therein, and touches on the dramatic changes wrought over the last forty years by oil revenues.

Overall, *History and Life* is an excellent text. The book is handsome. The maps are informative and of high quality. *History and Life* seems able to put much more information into the same number of pages as books developed by other publishers. And in welcome contrast to most textbook formats, the review questions and summaries at the end of the chapters enhance rather than impede the text.

Textbooks Reviewed

Social Studies Series

Across the Centuries. Houghton Mifflin, 1991.
Eastern Hemisphere. Macmillan, 1990.
Our World: Yesterday and Today. Scott, Foresman, 1988.
The Eastern Hemisphere Yesterday and Today. Silver Burdett & Ginn, 1990.

High School World History

History and Life. Scott, Foresman, 1990.
History of the World. Houghton Mifflin, 1990.
The Pageant of World History. Prentice Hall, 1990.

CALIFORNIA: The Story Continues

On a sultry July afternoon in Sacramento, the young man wearing a jellaba unfurled his prayer rug directly in front of the California state department of education on Capitol Mall, turned toward the east, and began his incantations, not far from the television cameras also present for the state's public hearings on social studies textbooks for kindergarten through the eighth grade.

These public hearings were yet another hurdle in the long process in which California has sought to improve the social studies curriculum and encourage textbook reform. What these proceedings reflect about the power and presence of ubiquitous, hypersensitive, multivalent interest groups runs well beyond the immediate issue of social studies textbooks in public schools. It indicates the extent of cultural gridlock that now attends all sensitive matters of cause and ethnicity throughout the nation.

In Sacramento, over one hundred people jammed into a drab, unventilated room, where they faced the table of commissioners who oversee the state curriculum and textbook adoption process. Each was allotted a few minutes to state complaints. A parade of speakers registered varying complaints to the commission, which had received and accepted the recommendations of a state textbook review panel for social studies books to be used by elementary and junior high school pupils.

After months of deliberation, a review panel had recommended the Houghton Mifflin series for kindergarten through eighth grade and Holt, Rinehart's *Story of America*. Sixteen other books, submitted by seven different publishers, were rejected. Few of the people testifying had anything positive to say about the books. No matter that the books under discussion had already passed muster for compliance with state laws and been vetted by top-drawer historians. Almost every complaint was based on the books' alleged ethnic and religious slights. Institutional prejudice, conspiratorial omission, and victimization were the watchwords of the day.

No one spoke to the real problem with the formal recommendations made in a state adoption that has captured the attention of educators and intellectuals around the country and will inevitably affect social studies texts through the 1990s: that many publishers had stayed away from the adoption, either unable or unwilling to field books congruent with the mandated California curriculum.

The power and presence of ubiquitous, hypersensitive, multivalent interest groups run well beyond the immediate issue of social studies textbooks in public schools.

This thin submission gave the state very few texts to choose from. Only one major publisher, Houghton Mifflin, had crafted its books explicitly to the state's 1987 curricular mandates, which tried to beef up the content of history, take nuanced multicultural approaches, and reintroduce the history of religion into the social studies curriculum. As a result, Houghton Mifflin achieved a virtual monopoly in the nation's largest state. California's school districts are expected to purchase about $200 million in new history and social studies books in coming years, even though lagging state education budgets may constrict the market.

The many wonderful advances in these recommended textbooks went unmentioned. That is not to say that the books are perfect. While the Houghton Mifflin series is elegant in format and lively in content, it makes no effort to restore running narrative to a primary position and simplify design. Quite the opposite. With a look not entirely foreign from *USA Today*, the books are kaleidoscopic in appearance. Text is presented in short takes, reflecting teachers' demands for lessons that are self-contained and quickly digested.

But none of the advocates in Sacramento seemed the least bit interested in overall quality or effective social studies education. Their concerns were nothing so banal and important as rich narrative and good storytelling. They had more particular and throbbing complaints about ethnicity and belief, representation and slant.

Maybe California is doing something right

with its texts, since feminists, Hispanics, and some other groups long dissatisfied by older social studies texts were inconspicuous at the hearings. But not in the mind of those who did speak out. A few advocates pointed out legitimate, albeit minor, textual problems. More of them focused on perceived evils within the books under consideration, on fancied slights, omissions, and distortions, conscious and unconscious, that scholars and historians who have carefully reviewed these materials are hard pressed to discern.

The most controversial books among those recommended were Houghton's sixth and seventh grade texts. The first, entitled *A Message of Ancient Days*, begins with paleolithic man and advances through classical antiquity. The second, *Across the Centuries*, carries world history forward to the eighteenth century.

The sixth grade subject matter is especially gripping for children of eleven or twelve. From cave dwellers to Pompeii, the exciting subject matter herein is too little studied in schools today. *A Message of Ancient Days* considers the origins of Judaism and Christianity at length. *Across the Centuries* likewise treats Islam and many other subjects in Asian and African history formerly short-circuited in textbooks. These two books cover the history of religion with a richness and nuance that should be applauded. Not surprisingly, though, it was religion that triggered many of the protests that day in Sacramento.

A number of Jewish representatives claimed that the recommended sixth grade text slighted and disparaged Judaism. The religion was presented as a crude antecedent to a more perfect religion, Christianity, they contended. The book suggested that Jesus had a better message than his Jewish forebears, as it stresses the love and charity in the Christian tradition. The book "stirs up anti-Jewish feeling" and "teaches history from a Christian perspective," said one representative. In response, the commission asked Houghton Mifflin to remove the phrase, "He [Jesus] stressed that the feelings people had in their hearts were more important than whether they followed religious laws and rituals."

California Muslims were also unhappy. Islam's coverage in the Houghton Mifflin texts included some mention of historical aggressiveness and religious passion against the infidel, unacceptable to the assembled activists, including one twelve-year-old girl clothed in a veil. "This is not a threat," one Muslim spokesman said, with a tone and intensity that sounded distinctly threatening. "But if our demands are not met, we will withdraw our children from school and mount lawsuits."

Gay activists were outraged that the alleged sexual preferences of Julius Caesar, Erasmus, Michelangelo, Alexander Hamilton, Eleanor Roosevelt, Willa Cather, and many other historical figures were not mentioned to provide "role models."

The newest textbook lobby, the homosexuals, came to the table to call for inclusion. Gay activists were outraged that the alleged sexual preferences of Julius Caesar, Erasmus, Michelangelo, Alexander Hamilton, Eleanor Roosevelt, Willa Cather, and many other notable historical figures were not mentioned to provide "role models" in these books, written for children in kindergarten through eighth grade. The charges against the texts verged on the outlandish. One spokesman concluded, based on some friendly correspondence between the Marquis de Lafayette and George Washington, "The father of our country may have been its first queen."

This was not what the Christian fundamentalists and Muslims wanted to hear. Muslims were smirking, shaking their heads, and muttering "Shame! Shame!" A Christian fundamentalist came in front of the commission to claim that homosexuals were conspiratorially intent on "reconditioning our nation's values." Christian fundamentalists, like other religious representatives that day, found insults and demeaning treatment in the books under consideration. Atheists too were unhappy that their point of view had been excluded.

Then came ethnic activists, most vocally the Afrocentric educators, who maintained that the "African influence" is seminal to the classical culture of Greece and Rome, and that white historians have systematically excluded this historiography from their writing. Text-

books contributed to a "mental holocaust" for black youngsters, said one woman dressed in a bright dashiki. "I know that these textbooks mean a whole lot of money to a lot of European people. But these textbooks are Eurocentric pap, slanted, racist, and wrong, the cause of self-esteem problems for our young," she said. Later controversy centered on two images that in one view compared savage "black" Neanderthals unfavorably with more civilized "white" Cro-Magnons.

In September, California held its second set of hearings, this time before the state board of education, which will act on or reject the recommendations of the curriculum commission in the middle of October. The complaints were identical, although the proceedings were even less orderly. The hearings were interrupted repeatedly by constant grumbling, clapping, and even some banner waving. A well-organized cadre of Afrocentric radicals jeered fellow blacks who testified in favor of the recommended textbooks, making ugly slurs and suggestions about the reasons for their support. At one point the head of the state board of education called for police to restore order to the hearings.

What was evident toward the end of these two emotional afternoons was the inability of most people in attendance to understand that the main goal of the recommended textbooks is to create literate citizens, pluralistic in outlook and knowledgable about their origins and institutions. Their interest was in image and self-promotion, in panegyric and hagiography, in past grievances and scores to settle. Truth did not matter. What counted was prominent and favorable treatment for themselves and excoriation of their enemies.

In the meantime, it is not hard to guess the chilling message these California carnivals are sending to other publishers, who dispatched their representatives to the meetings and who plan to submit new social studies books to California beginning in 1992. Don't take chances. Play it safe. Stick with the tried and true. Blandness sells, or at least, it appeases the people who have a bottomless reservoir of discontent in matters of religion, sex, and ethnicity.

— Gilbert T. Sewall

COMING STATE ADOPTIONS

As the California adoption comes to a close, several new state adoptions begin, to be played out during the next year. The largest will occur in Indiana. The states of South Carolina and Oregon are also in adoption. Publishers' submissions reveal a greater choice of books, much wider than in California, since text makers face state establishments and curricula that more readily fit with their products. In 1991, the American Textbook Council intends to monitor these adoptions in order to analyze trends in textbook development.

THE IMAGINARY CANON

By Joseph S. Salemi

Literature departments today are afflicted with so much palaver about the "canon" that one hesitates to add another voice to the cacophony. The din is inescapable; in faculty meetings, curriculum committees, and that most tedious of purgatories, the academic conference, spurious questions of "canonicity" and "canon formation" vex our profession, to the detriment of the real business of literary studies. But when the history of this phenomenon is written, in times made saner by distance and detachment, chroniclers will marvel that nearly an entire generation of scholars worked themselves into a lather over something that does not exist.

The terms *canon* and *canonical* are properly applied to those works of an author that are genuinely his. The usage is borrowed from patristic commentators who distinguished the "canonical" books of Scripture from those that were apocryphal or derivative. A writer's canon is determined by weighing internal and external evidence to make reasonable judgments about who wrote a given text.

For example, arguments over whether a newly discovered manuscript poem is part of the Shakespearean canon, or whether the treatise *Ad Herennium* is actually by Cicero, are concerned with authenticity of attribution and nothing more. In this sense, questions of canonicity have been a part of scholarship since antiquity, when the Homeric texts were purged of accretions by learned editors, and when the librarians at Alexandria compiled

meticulous lists of an author's true works.

But today, the term *canon* has lost its benign neutrality and become a rhetorically loaded buzzword. A reference to the "canon" is almost always a sign that the speaker is out to make a surreptitious ideological point. Like so many tendentious neologisms—one thinks of "insensitivity," the current Newspeak for free expression—the word is designed to avoid real thought by evoking the visceral responses of left-liberal opinion, while disarming potential opposition with a vague moral reproach.

When earnest young graduate students and angry assistant professors rant against the canon, they conjure up visions of a formidable collection of "standard literary works" or "great books" whose authority, prestige, and prescriptive status are supposed to serve vested sociopolitical interests. According to this demonology, by epitomizing correct and approved behavior patterns while stigmatizing deviant ones, the great books function as an internalized thought-police, providing intellectual ratification of the *status quo* and denying it to potentially subversive challenges. This is a powerful myth, and it commands today wide allegiance in academic circles.

The usual bill of indictment charges this imaginary canon with all sorts of unspeakable sins, the most common of which are *elitism*—the canon is available to readers only after a long and expensive formal education—*ethnocentrism*—its texts are largely of European provenance—*racism*—it contains works that do not pay obeisance to current pieties about race relations—and *sexism*—its authors are mostly male, and sometimes use language that would get you lynched at a National Organization of Women convention. One also hears complaints about *militarism*—many books celebrate soldierly virtues and the glory of combat—and *classism*—leisured wealth is a subject of admiration in many works.

I recently listened to one aggrieved young woman at a Modern Language Association conference drone on about the *speciesism* of the canon—that is, how texts like *Genesis* and the *Odyssey*, with their multiple blood sacrifices, show utter disregard for the rights of animals.

In this sense, the term *canon* is simply literary criticism's equivalent for the all-purpose expletive "establishment," heard everywhere during the disturbances of the 1960s. Just as the establishment was the source of all evil and oppression to radicalized students of those times, the demonized canon is today's bugbear for those who long to fight the battles of the sixties again, but this time from the well-defended bunkers of tenured appointments and generous research grants.

Rather than attack policemen, radicalized faculty attack lists of books, in the curious belief that the policeman's authority is somehow linked to the curriculum requirements of introductory literature courses. It is a comfortable kind of militancy for liberals, who are never happier than when they are taking a radical posture and an upper-middle-class salary.

In point of fact there is no canon and there never has been one. A number of works are well known, others are less well known, and some are comparatively unknown. The borders of these three categories constantly shift, as generations pass and tastes change. Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*, almost universally familiar to medieval readers, is today virtually unread outside of scholarly circles. John Donne had a minor reputation as a poet until T.S. Eliot revived interest in him earlier this century. Renaissance opinion placed Mantuan's *Eclogues* and the *Idyllia* of Ausonius in the top rank of Latin poetry; today those judgments are questionable. Even in the same century and country, opinions differ as to a writer's merit. But no sinister cabal of teachers, publishers, or critics determines the status of a work—tastes are too varied even among the educated for any such conspiracy to emerge, much less be effective.

In addition, the sheer mass of worthwhile literature that the Western world has produced makes the very idea of a select canon ludicrous. Our tradition includes writers as stylistically diverse as Dante and Kafka; as politically irreconcilable as Machiavelli and Thoreau; as morally polar as Thomas à Kempis and Nietzsche. It would take several lifetimes just to read the available texts; to believe that all of them can be made to serve the ends of social conformism takes the determined

credulity of ideological commitment. And yet when it comes to the imaginary canon, too many professors suffer from just such credulity. Their partisanship overwhelms their common sense. This notion that some hidden social force is brainwashing students into intellectual passivity by means of a controlled reading list would be laughable, were it not also an index of how far conspiratorial looniness has come to dominate literary studies.

Under such conditions, those of us who reject the politicization of curriculum decisions must not allow the rhetoric of canon-bashers to go unchallenged. When we hear buzzwords like "pluralism," "inclusion," and "hegemony," we should be immediately on guard. When colleagues object to offensive language or attitudes in standard texts, we must assert that it is not an assigned task of literature to be nice to everyone. When they talk slightingly of books by "dead white European males," we should forcefully remind them that such a phrase invokes the very sexism and racism it purports to condemn. But it is also necessary for us to point out, whenever the occasion arises, that the abhorred canon and the baleful power it exerts are both purely imaginary.

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ROALD DAHL ON BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

The celebrated children's book author Roald Dahl recently recalled the books that spurred his lifelong love of literature. In the process he registered some wise words about what children's books should do, and why many books today—texts and trade—fail. When Dahl was growing up in England during the 1920s, he writes:

Every one of us became avid readers, but there were far fewer juveniles available than there are now. The only ones I can remember vividly were *The Secret Garden*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Treasure Island*, *The Wind in the Willows*, . . . Because of the shortage of children's books . . . we very rapidly graduated to more adult fiction . . . all of Dickens, *King Solomon's Mines* and Rider Haggard's *She*, all of Kipling, Conan Doyle's *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, all of Jules Verne. By the time we were ten, we were reading all of Galsworthy, Hugh Walpole, Mary Webb, Hardy and the rest.

At the age of fourteen, I think I had read just about every great classic in literature—Tolstoy, Dostoevski, Balzac, Austen, Bronte, as well as plenty of others. Reading on this scale would be virtually unheard of among today's young people, but I did it and most of my contemporaries did it. We loved books. We were brought up on them. As a result, we not only acquired a large vocabulary, we assimilated many different styles of writing and we became fluent readers of English prose.

Today, parents who want their children to love books have two problems to contend with. First there is the ubiquitous television. Second, there is the question of knowing which books are going to enthrall and which are going to bore. It is better to give a child no book at all than a boring one. But in these days the juvenile market is so flooded with rubbishy books that it is difficult not to become confused.

The content of a children's book is basically unimportant. The sole purpose of that book is to convince the child that reading is great fun. The book must be so exciting and funny and wonderful that the child falls in love with it. Then the battle is won and the realization that books are easy and lovely and enthralling begins to dawn on the young reader. There need be no message in the book, no moral, just sheer entertainment. Not all writers for children or indeed the critics have come to terms with this simple truth.

Excerpted from the Children's Book Council's *CBC Features* (1990), with permission of the author.

NOTED WITH INTEREST

★ A report entitled *The Age of Indifference*, written under the auspices of the Times Mirror Foundation, was released this summer. Its findings should frighten educators and others who are interested in conveying the precious importance of civic life and activity in a self-governing nation. The authoritative report indicates a significant decline of knowledge and interest in public affairs among young adults aged eighteen to twenty-nine. The generation born after the year 1960 "knows less, cares less, votes less and is less critical of its leaders and institutions than young people in the past," concluded the report. *The Age of Indifference* confirms other studies that conclude that the concept of citizenship as understood and expressed by young adults consists entirely of individual rights; these same people make no mention of any responsibilities connected to citizenship.

This emergent adult generation is unlike the one that came of age during the upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s. Those now under 30 exhibit apathy and cynicism. But their anomie seems to be less a result of political disillusionment than it is *indifference* to issues that do not affect them personally. The larger world seems not to apply.

Teenagers and young adults have always been narcissistic, of course. So what is different now? Today this cohort appears paralyzed by social issues that they feel are beyond their control. They avoid commitments whenever possible, and block out bad news about public affairs and the precarious state of the planet, according to the report. Political involvement focuses on issues of immediate and personal concern such as government interference with civil liberties and freedoms. Consciousness of civic obligation and duties seems comparatively thin.

Many experts blame educational institutions for failing to inspire in young people an interest in history, which might make current public events more compelling to them as they grow older. But blame cannot fall only on schools and colleges. Education is viewed by many under thirty merely as a means to an end. Teachers despair that the traditional quest for knowledge and understanding seems to be absent from even their best students.

Coursework in schools too often reflects the *Zeitgeist*. A large number of social studies lessons deal only with the here and now, with the trendy, the practical, and the selfish. Research indicates the growing popularity of tabloid television shows such as "A Current Affair," which mix information and entertainment with emphasis on scandal, celebrity, and notoriety. How are texts to compete?

Today's schoolbooks themselves are a response to the demands of entertainment-seeking students with short attention spans. By one recent estimate, 44 percent of public school students have a television in their own bedrooms. In an attempt to compete for the attention of the MTV generation, publishers produce textbooks with shimmering graphics and punchy design. Content and product quality are often sacrificed to expensive packaging. But then, looks count, and as falling SAT scores suggest, reading may soon become passé.

★ In the *sic transit* department, we duly record the departure of the absurd California Task Force to Promote Self-Esteem and Personal and Social Responsibility. After three years, the Task Force opened its last newsletter with the bromide, "Life's about everyone getting A's, not about some normal distribution curve." This little statement reflects a radical new way of thinking, increasingly imbedded in therapeutic social studies and "values" texts. All we have to do is to feel good about ourselves and to stop making judgments of quality, and then, presto, Nirvana. If only it were so. Self-esteem results from achievement and attainment, which are by no means zero-sum activities, and which include elements of self-control and general knowledge. The Task Force did have some influence. Educators now have a new buzzword and explanation for student disaffection. In California and elsewhere, they have seized upon self-esteem to avoid some hard truths about what makes students proud of themselves and what truly elevates the human spirit.

Unfortunately, the self-esteem idea has received special attention from urban educators, who blame the absence of self-esteem for underperformance by non-whites in schools.

Meanwhile, a tart editorial in *The Economist* noted a new American problem, deploring its "decadence" that "lies in too readily blaming others for problems, rather than accepting responsibility oneself." One facet of this phenomenon, it asserted, is the "warped idea that the problem with America's underclass is a lack of self-esteem, and that the answer to poor educational performance is to teach more self-esteem."

The eminent weekly had another outlook in mind for educators to nurture. "The characteristic that in the past drove generations from the underclass to prosperity was not self-esteem, it was self-discipline. The reason that Japanese schoolchildren—and the children of Asian immigrants in America—learn so much more than their American counterparts is discipline, not self-esteem."

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SOCIAL STUDIES REVIEW

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COMMON CULTURE AND MULTICULTURE

It is time for some straight talk about multiculturalism. In 1990, no issue in social studies was more prominent or explosive. Moreover, the issue reached well beyond textbooks, social studies, and the academy. "The country is in the grip of what might be called a cult of otherness, the word otherness being highly fashionable in academic circles these days. Twenty-five years ago the civil rights movement began to erase differences imposed by race and ethnic origin. Now the cult of otherness asserts that the differences are unbridgeable," wrote *New York Times* cultural correspondent Richard Bernstein, in light of controversies in the arts and militant assaults on the idea of a common culture.

Yet increasingly, multiculturalism seems to be a word drained of meaning. For some, it encompasses a newfound recognition of the nation's diverse ethnic nature and an appreciation of those regions of the world outside of Europe and North America. For others, it represents a movement against the school-based imposition of Western institutions and values, especially upon students that come from non-Western backgrounds.

Multiculturalism is the essence of American history, of course. Unlike Japan or Denmark, the people of the United States are not bound together by common religion or origin. The American people come from many ethnic backgrounds. This was true in the seventeenth century, and it is true more than ever today. The presence of Haitians and Yemenis in New York, Sonorans and Guatamalans in Los Angeles, and Vietnamese in Seattle and Minnneapolis all attest to the dynamic nature of American demography.

Call it the melting pot or the salad bowl, most Americans have long felt that the nation

INSIDE

A special issue on multiculturalism and what it means.

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While Afrocentrism calls itself multicultural, it is a separatist movement. A troubling new curriculum base from Portland does not help.

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The new technology is a promising tool, not a panacea.

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draws synergistic strength from its ethnic heterogeneity and cultural pluralism. Americans may not all be of the same faith or appearance. But they find a common bond in the democratic vision of liberty and opportunity. This political idea seems benign and positive compared to historical alternatives, a view shared by people around the world.

During the last twenty years school history curricula and textbooks have been transformed by greater sensitivity toward cultures and groups formerly misrepresented or underrepresented in national and world history textbooks. Books have faced the dark side of the national past. The plight of slaves, native tribes, indentured Asian laborers, and more has captured the sympathetic attention of historians and teachers alike, who have acted to correct the record and lesson plan.

Still, many who call themselves multicultural educators want a new "balance of information about the history, culture, and contributions" of African-Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and Indians. The primary purpose, they say, is to build student awareness of his or her own ethnic heritage. They seek to "eliminate personal and national ethnocentrism so that one understands that a specific culture is not intrinsically superior or inferior to another."

Those who are hostile to "Eurocentric" social studies claim that ethnic minorities "look into the curricular mirror and see nothing," for "our heritage" is not "their [Anglo-European] heritage," asserts Stanford University professor of anthropology Renato Rosaldo. Some ethnics seek to create a dichotomy that is not real between their own group and the common culture. Multiculturalism for them is not, say, the study of foreign languages or global geography. It comes much closer to oppression studies or ethnic separatism.

Some lay people have a hard time understanding the urgency of multicultural complaints. Lawyers and accountants are likely to ask: Because the nation's political, economic, and religious institutions derive largely from Europe in general and England in particular, why should the history be taught any other way? But the adversaries of Eurocentrism believe to emphasize Western civilization is limited, culturally imperialistic, false.

Multiculturalism has forced all developers of instructional materials to rethink and revise what students of all backgrounds will encounter in their social studies lessons. This debate can be productive. Yet many educators seem to be moving away from the idea of commonwealth, where the public household stands above individual differences, and where a common heritage is honored by all to advance the common good. Educational separatism takes many forms. In Chicago, for example, some educators are now considering how to advance multicultural *preschools*. The question needs to be asked: Should the education of three-year-olds begin with lessons in racial self-identification?

Some people will find commonwealth a dusty, outdated, or erroneous concept, a deluding relic of the past or an instrument of oppression. But any serious debate about multiculturalism needs to consider what a wholesale loss of faith in the idea might entail for the nation's future, should fogs of ethnic divisiveness seep into every area of American life, just at the moment when the nation's future as a multicultural community is upon us, all Americans.

For those who have worked to promote authentic multiculturalism in social studies textbooks, current conditions create a troubling situation. Too many educators and intellectuals fail to acknowledge the huge and hard-won triumphs over two decades to expand and recraft the curriculum. They are oblivious to the "curriculum of inclusion" that has marked subject-matter reform since the 1960s and put to rest what was a narrow and chauvinistic course of history.

For this reason this issue of the *Social Studies Review* tackles multiculturalism, providing a number of reviews, reports, and views on the subject. We pay special attention to a current topic in black history, Afrocentrism, an unsound idea—not to be confused with multiculturalism—that has swept through urban school districts during the last six months. On a different note, the issue considers a revolution in instructional materials, not ideological but technological. Videodisks are here, and they are almost certainly destined to promote basic changes

in teaching and learning during the coming decade.

Meanwhile, we wish you the best for 1991 and note that the American Textbook Council is now entering its third year of activity in textbook review.

THE AFROCENTRIC IDEA

Afrocentrism is not multicultural. It is separatist and particularistic in outlook. As Robert K. Landers has recently written, "the intent of the Afrocentrists is not completely clear. Some seem to look upon European-Americans as inherently inferior, but others seem just to want all cultural groups and their respective viewpoints to be treated as equally valid."

Such historical revisionism is not the old corrective outrage of the American reform tradition that has denounced Tories, Simon Legrees, and Robber Barons. Rejected is the idea of a public household greater than its legion members, holding together through the collaborative and cooperative action of citizens. Sometimes, Afrocentrists step outside the American tradition of honorable opposition. Vocal, self-proclaimed "scholar-activists" fail to believe that such a tradition has ever been or is now in place, at least for ethnic minorities.

In its dogmatism and intolerance, Afrocentrism comes closer to a system of belief than a system of knowledge or study. Those involved take its claims to be lapidary truths, and those who reject or doubt these claims are taken to be racists or Uncle Toms. Afrocentrism is ethnocentrism incarnate—exactly what its advocates say they are remedying—an ethnocentrism in which one group holds a monopoly on virtue and others are blemished by inexpiable heritage.

Many urban educators gravitate toward Afrocentric curricula on the premise that they will advance black student self-esteem. History is supposed to perform therapeutic services. Whether such lessons will have their intended effect is open to question. They will not if spurious subject matter misinforms children. When Afrocentrists insist that Africans colonized the American continent 2,000 years before Columbus, against all available anthropological evidence, they are deceiving themselves and students. How does this build self-esteem?

Afrocentrism seems to operate on the premise that black students have nothing to learn from those of different races, other than about the ill-treatment of their ancestors. Its inspirational ends are likely to replace more productive lessons that explicate the foundations of the nation and world young American blacks actually live in.

Portland Materials

During the last year a lengthy document called the *African-American Baseline Essays*, first published for the Portland, Oregon, public schools, has circulated widely in urban school districts. The essays—about African history and African-American contributions to art, language, mathematics, science and music—were prepared and published by a team who take their interpretations to be unassailable in the face of contradictory scholarship.

The preface of what are commonly called the "Portland materials" calls for "balance of information about the history, culture, and contributions" of six racial groups and "a structured process designed to foster understanding, acceptance, and constructive relations among people of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds." It goes on to say that multicultural education in all curricular areas should "build an awareness of one's own cultural and ethnic heritage" and "eliminate personal and national ethnocentrism so that one understands that a specific culture is not intrinsically superior or inferior to another."

These are well-intentioned sentiments, even though they seem to make ethnic egalitarianism the first requirement of academic study. This becomes a problem in the study of history and civic development, as it is impossible to remake the past in accordance with wishful thinking and affirmative action.

The *African-American Baseline Essays*' multicultural premise is not carried out in the chauvinistic—and ethnocentric—subject matter essays that follow. Fundamental to its history section is the idea that Egyptian civilization is an antecedent of Western civilization. While conventional historians

would agree, making necessary and sometimes esoteric qualifications as to the degree of antecedence, in the dominant Afrocentric view, Egypt was a "black" civilization, a fact conspiratorially obscured by white archaeologists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The Portland materials claim: "Old and new research on Africa and its place in human history has proved that Africa is the birthplace of mankind and was, for many centuries, in the forefront of human progress. African history must be looked at anew and seen in its relationship to world history," and "Egypt's place in world history is still being debated, mainly because a large number of Western scholars do not want to accept the fact that this was a nation and that its great achievements in history was the collective achievement of an African people."

To think of Egypt either in the context of Europe or Africa is simply anachronistic.

Setting the tone, the first page of the Portland social studies materials declares that from the fifteenth century: "The Europeans not only colonized most of the world, but also began to colonize information about the world and its people. In order to do this, they had to forget, or pretend to forget, all that they had previously known about the Africans." The bold and sweeping assertion that "Africa is the birthplace of mankind" fails to qualify or distinguish whether the author is talking about Paleolithic, Neolithic, or Egyptian civilization. A disturbing inexactness with period and era exists here and throughout the materials.

The Nilotic civilization in fact developed in an arable river valley and delta before 4,000 B.C. just beyond the western margin of the Fertile Crescent. The agricultural revolution which allowed human settlement and rudimentary civilization was intercontinental in scope and occurred over four millenia in all parts of the world. The Nilotic civilization apparently developed from Neolithic settlements in Anatolia (circa 8,000 B.C.) and Mesopotamia (circa 7,000 B.C.). Egyptian cilivization was at once an African, Mediterranean, and Middle Eastern society—and unaware of such modern geographic distinctions. To think of Egypt either in the context of Europe or Africa is simply anachronistic.

Most conventional historians depict the ancient Egyptians as a highly nationalistic society that was largely unconscious of race. "When you talk about Egypt, it's just not right to talk about black and white. That's all just American terminology and it serves American purposes. I can understand and sympathize with the desires of Afro-Americans to affiliate themselves with Egypt. But it isn't that simple," says Frank J. Yurco of the Field Museum in Chicago, a leading Egyptologist. "We are applying a racial divisiveness to Egypt that they would never have accepted. They would have considered this argument absurd, and this is something we could really learn from."

The Portland materials take slavery to be a diabolical collusion of European economics and religion based on the "consistent application of mental and physical torture." They say: "The Christian church came up with a design to bring about complete subversion of the Africans to the desired slave code of conduct demanded by the feudal societies of the Americas."

In fact, intense white unease with slavery dates from the seventeenth century and is embodied in the unpleasant compromises of the Founding. What is omitted here is the crucial fact that origins of abolitionism are found within white Protestant sects—and all through Europe of the Enlightenment. Leading clergy in New England and Pennsylvania from the seventeenth century considered slavery a repulsive and evil condition and were in the vanguard of efforts to end it.

After the Civil War, the materials assert, "Africans began to build new institutions, mainly schools. Most of these new schools soon began to fall into old traps. They were imitations of white schools, whose teachings were offensive to African people." What is meant by "old traps" and "offensive teaching" cannot be known. But it is hard to fathom how basic learning in more than 4,000 schools established by the Freedman's Bureau and private organizations was either.

Thousands of northern whites—mainly young women organized by Protestant churches and missionary societies—came

south after the Civil War to teach in communities so hostile that they risked their lives daily to teach black people. As Langston Hughes and Milton Meltzer have pointed out in their recently reissued 1956 classic, now entitled *African-American History*, "These schools had some 9,000 teachers and almost 250,000 students. It was the first widespread free public school system in the South. And it led to free education for whites as well as blacks." By 1869, they estimate that 20 percent of freed blacks were literate.

Other points about slavery are missing in these Afrocentric curricula. Should it be noted, for example, that slavery still exists in Africa? That African kings and Arabs in East Africa were partners in the slave trade? That the slave trade run by Arabs in East Africa flourished through the nineteenth century and was extinguished only through the aggressive efforts of British colonial authorities by the 1890s? These are all interesting subjects for black studies, but no troubling complexities such as these are to be found in the Afrocentric materials developed in Portland. In fact, the materials turn a blind eye toward any possible wrongdoings committed by Egyptians or Africans: "Non-Biblical history of the period indicates the Hebrews were not slaves in Egypt. Some of the Hebrews mistakenly took sides with the enemies of Africa and were punished. This punishment did not consist of slavery."

The science section of the Portland materials attributes to Africa fully and without qualification the human discovery of time, the control and use of fire, the development of tool technology, language, and agriculture. Some of these claims are false. Others cannot be verified. In fact, trained anthropologists and historians are extremely tentative and distinctive about the origins of humankind and prehistory, as evidence is slight and contradictory, and definitions require careful calibration. What is meant by language, for example? Are we talking about australopithecines living 3 million years ago or Homo sapiens, the oldest fossils of which are only about 150,000 years old?

This section also gives credit to blacks, based on Egyptian contributions to science, for standing outside the Western technological tradition: "From the world view of Africans, there are many realities beyond the five primary senses. Learning is a holistic process, through symbolic imagery and rhythm, with a lot of attention given to inner experiences and the process of thought. Africans understood the multidimensionality of the mind: logical/rational, intuitive/symbolic, and emotional/ spiritual. Well, the beauty, the wholeness, of this educational approach is being rediscovered and implemented today, in corporate as well as educational settings."

The Portland materials and similar Afrocentric curricula play fast and loose with historical fact and interpretation. They are rife with undocumented assertions and dubious sources.

On art, the curricular essays declare: "The art of African people in Africa and in the Diaspora has suffered in its relationship with, and assessment by, Western culture for several reasons. Sadly, they all emanate from European attitudes and assumptions generated in support of slavery. Black art cannot be understood through an entirely technical and formal evaluation and examination. It emerged from a different cultural reality than European art."

These bizarre assertions speak for themselves. This is not science or art history at all. The science passage is much closer to New Age psychobabble. These statements are utterly unverifiable, and serious educators of all backgrounds should reject such foolishness and racialism.

The Portland materials and similar Afrocentric curricula play fast and loose with historical fact and interpretation. They are rife with undocumented assertions and dubious sources. They make bold and inflammatory claims based on limited or non-existent evidence. They fan racial chauvinism and resentment. In this respect, such Afrocentric materials are misinformed and politically divisive.

Fortunately, Afrocentrists do not speak for all blacks; they represent instead a vocal minority. Their distorted historiography springs from emotion, not scholarship. Most

urban educators, black and white, understand that their essential task is to help prepare students to live and work in the existing society, which demands a certain competence in such basic skills as reading and writing.

Americans of all backgrounds live in a world shaped by Western civilization, especially its technology. The non-Western nations that have improved the lives of their citizens, including Japan and other Pacific Rim countries, have done so by following the West's lead. Nearly everyone recognizes that industrialized societies, whatever their inequities, are superior to the alternatives in diet, comfort, and leisure. Moreover, the triumph of capitalism over communism in Eastern Europe has shown that democratic government has universal appeal. These benefits should not be dismissed lightly. In undeveloped countries, one encounters greater economic miseries and political horrors, and the traditions of liberty, equality, and justice are likely to be absent.

In America, progress for many members of "marginalized" groups is frustratingly slow. Many critics of Afrocentrism have made the point that its influence is growing because of despair over the condition of many black youths. But change is inevitable, and as more minorities join the middle and professional classes and assume the values of the establishment, there may be fewer outcries against Western oppression. Afrocentrism may be a cause for alarm, if indeed it portends the inability of large numbers of Americans to assimilate into the commonwealth. More likely, it is an issue of the moment that will not stand the test of time or common sense.

MULTICULTURALISM: A Selected Bibliography

During the last year there has been no shortage of news articles, position papers, and reports on multiculturalism in general and Afrocentrism in particular.

The push for a "curriculum of inclusion" is not new in the world of textbooks. Many of today's complaints about social studies textbooks are to be found in reports like the Council on Interracial Books for Children's *Human and Antihuman Values in Children's Books* (1976). James A. Banks of the University of Washington published the first edition of *Teaching Strategies for Ethnic Studies* (Allyn & Bacon, 4th ed., 1987) in 1975. Since then, Banks has published *Multicultural Education* (Allyn & Bacon, 1988). In response to decades of complaints about representation and tone, publishers have issued guidelines such as *Eliminating Stereotypes* (Houghton Mifflin, 1981), including detailed coda as to acceptable formulations in dealing with sensitive subjects.

The Afrocentric view is embodied in the *African-American Baseline Essays*, developed for Portland public schools and recently revised, available for $25 from Portland's Multicultural/Multiethnic Education Office, 501 North Dixon Street, Portland, Oregon 97227. A more responsible and interesting treatment of black history is to be found in *African-American History* (1990) by Langston Hughes and Milton Melzer, first published in 1956 as *A Pictorial History of the Negro in America*, updated and newly released by Scholastic.

Opposition to multicultural education that is anti-Western, anti-national, or separatist in outlook now comes from a number of critics. Scott McConnell and Eric Breindel's "Head to Come," in *The New Republic*, January 8, 1990, raised early doubts about such curricular views, embodied in a 1989 New York State task force report. Arthur B. Schlesinger's *Wall Street Journal* essay, "When Ethnic Studies Are Un-American," appeared in the Summer 1990 issue of the *Social Studies Review*. Diane Ravitch also considers the issue in an essay entitled "Multiculturalism: E Pluribus Plures" in the Summer 1990 issue of *The American Scholar*. More recently, a nuanced synthesis of multicultural and Afrocentric controversies that summarizes these complex curricular and textbook issues is found in *Conflict over Multicultural Education* by Robert K. Landers, published by *Editorial Research Reports*, dated November 30, 1990 (vol. 1, no. 44).

THE ATLANTA CONFERENCE

This fall, Afrocentric advocates from all over the country gathered in Atlanta to discuss and consolidate their views. The report that editor Andrew Sullivan filed to The New Republic *may give pause about this new urban educational movement:*

The Second National Conference on the Infusion of African and African-American Content in the High School Curriculum took place in the Marriott Marquis hotel here over the weekend of November 2. By coincidence, it overlapped with the Big Game Hunters of North America. In the conference foyer large men in plaid shirts watched videos of antelopes staggering to their death, while dozens of high school teachers in African garb milled around them. Fixed on the wall above vendors selling *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, the stuffed heads of bears stared impassively forward, their jaws levered open, rug-style.

After two days of seminars, I began to get a sense of how the bears felt. The aim of the conference, it turned out, was not how best to teach the black American and African experience in the classroom and to weave it into the multicultural American education. It was a bid to add energy to the movement to transform the high school curriculum by giving it an exclusively Afrocentric base. Behind this endeavor lay the conviction that all Western knowledge is a corruption of Egyptian, i.e., black African, thought, and must therefore be junked. Schoolchildren, black and white, should be taught everything—math, history, art, science, English—from a black African perspective.

The conference was sponsored by, among others, Gillette, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Macmillan, *Science Weekly*, and BellSouth. Its agenda, charted in a 1983 text known as the Portland *African-American Baseline Essays*, has been adopted in high schools in Portland, Oregon, and is being implemented in Pittsburgh, Indianapolis, Atlanta, and Washington, D.C. The conference organizer, Asa Hilliard, is on the committee to overhaul New York state's high school curriculum. The meeting was addressed by Thomas Sobol, New York state commissioner of education. More than a thousand high school teachers and administrators attended from all parts of the country. Glowing reports were broadcast on CNN and NPR.

My orientation began with a talk by Theophile Obenga of Marien N'Gouabi University in Gabon about how Greek philosophy was plagiarized from black African Egypt. It continued with an attack on Stanford's controversial new multicultural curriculum, by Joyce King of Santa Clara University. "The people in power want to maintain a myth: that our common culture is multicultural," she argued. "But the common culture of America is a system based on racism and hierarchy. You can imagine all the Platos and Iliads and Greeks that stayed on the list."

Professor King was not the only one to stick it to the Greeks. After two days of seminars, Plato and Aristotle were vilified about as regularly as Reagan and Bush. This was strange since, according to the speakers, Plato and Aristotle had also derived their entire thought from black Africa. The irony was resolved by describing the Greeks as the West's "affirmative action kids," preferred by Western scholars for their race, but not as smart as Africans. In one lecture, "affirmative action kids" was contemptuous shorthand for anybody from Xenophon to Herodotus. Whenever they were mentioned, the audience—school teachers and administrators, about four-fifths black and one-fifth white—snickered.

One of the most popular talks of the weekend was given by Wade Nobles, who runs a "Manhood Development and Training Program" for troubled black males in a multiracial high school in Oakland, California. He began with a request from a pastor for permission to begin. This was to follow the African custom of seeking permission of elders before engaging in any communal activity. Dressed in a long, lilac-blue robe, he carried a fetish with him to the podium: a small sacred object to link him with his ancestors and to ward away evil.

It was imperative, Nobles argued, that black education be rid of white influences. "When we adopt other people's theories, we are like Frankenstein doing other people's wills. It's

like someone drinking some good stuff, vomiting it, and then we have to catch the vomit and drink it ourselves." In case the audience was still unclear about his precise meaning, he elaborated: "The Greeks gave back the vomit of the African way.... Don't become the vomit-drinkers!" "Teach, brother, teach!" cried a woman behind me. A black women in front of me put her arm around her white male companion and grinned at him. "We can resist disease," Nobles went on, "but we have to inoculate our community."

The essence of European culture, Nobles argued, was "linear polarities." The West focused on fact and fiction, proof and unreality, the separate entities of male and female. African civilization rejected these dichotomies, and was concerned with the invisible, the indivisibility of the male and female entities, and the irrelevance of time: "Our beginning was not on the clock: we *were* the clock." The Genesis story pointed not to the choice between good and evil, but to the wisdom of the serpent in remaining true to himself. And everything pointed to the racial superiority of black Africans: "We are the creative cause.... Black folk *be*. We *be*. We be doin' it. And our bodies tell us our physical essence and we don't listen. Our fundamental meaning has been changed from being to doing. We have to go from being to becoming.... These middle-class people don't understand that you don't *do*. You have to *be*."

Nobles is not a marginal figure. For several sections of his talk, the audience recited his well-rehearsed lines as if remembering some familiar litany of faith. During the question-and-answer session, most teachers asked how to get their schools in touch with his program. There was a slight qualm from a young woman that Nobles was only concerned with males, to which he retorted, "We're not talking all this silly sexist stuff white women have us running behind." Little protest emerged about the idea of teaching Egyptian hieroglyphs, cleansing rituals, numerology, and physics to ninth graders. As to the prospect of such children getting jobs, Nobles replied, "When we educate a black man, we're not educating him for a job, we're educating him for eternity."

Thomas Sobol followed Nobles on the agenda. He'd fought a lonely battle, as he portrayed it, to support the conference's objectives as education commissioner in New York state. But he realized his limits: "I'm a white middle-aged male. I can't help that." His speech argued against the melting-pot image of America and in favor of a "mosaic." "We will not solve the problems of education until we come to terms with the problems of race and class." The audience took his sincerity quietly, the only awkward moment coming when he noted that he still felt that "our Western tradition of democratic institutions and the rule of law must be maintained." The woman next to me complained that this was precisely what she was against. At the end, Leonard Jeffries, chairman of the department of black studies at City College of New York, who believes that multicultural education is "mental genocide," yelled opposition to Sobol's moderation. "I understand where you're coming from," Sobol replied. "You may not believe I understand it, but I do. It comes out of pain and anger and injustice. In my limited capacity to understand it, I understand it."

The major social event of the conference was the Ashanti Enstoolment ceremony, held in the Imperial Ballroom. An enstoolment is a mark of respect for an African elder—in this case John Henrik Clarke, professor emeritus at Hunter College in New York—and involves an elaborate lowering of the man three times onto the seat of learning. The ceremony began with the blowing of a shell-horn and the beating of African drums. Professors and teachers processed in elaborate African costume; Jeffries held a stick aloft; young girls performed a beautiful barefoot dance. A minister poured water from a jug north, south, east, and west. As he poured to the east, he asked the thousand or so in the audience to invoke the names of their ancestors. The names of "Marcus," "Malcolm," "Elijah Muhammed" rang through the hall. "Ancestors, reclaim us, rename us, in Atlanta, in diaspora," intoned the minister.

A woman in a large headdress came on the stage: "May I ask the elders for permission to speak?" They gave permission. "Good evening," she said to the crowd, who re-

sponded meekly. "Now we can do better than that," she retorted, reminding us that this was, after all, a conference of high school teachers. Then five bare-chested men in sashes, with gold bangles around their heads, paraded in, carrying a vast yellow parasol topped by a small ivory elephant. Underneath: a large, stern woman, apparently the "queen mother," and, behind her, the diminutive Clarke, dressed in a suit and tie. Jeffries ranted for a while on the podium: "Education is not just about passing exams to get jobs. It's about moving forward and tapping into our ancestors." We then recited a pledge: "We, the African community, in the hells of North America, do pledge our minds, our selves, and our bodies to further the struggle . . . because the work that we Africans have to do is the work of eternity, the work of the pyramid builders."

There was something about the event that finally began to sicken. It started with the expensive costumes of the predominantly middle-class crowd. It continued with some of the points already made that day: that ancient Egypt was uniformly a black African culture, that no Semitic peoples were involved in the building of the pyramids, that no Jews were enslaved in Egypt, that Western philosophy was "vomit"—and the ingenuousness with which such ideas were received. It culminated in Clarke's assertion that no black American should soil herself with Christianity: "At what point do we stop this mental prostitution to a religion invented by foreigners? All religion is artificial. All the major religions of the world are male chauvinist murder cults."

Maybe what I picked to see at the conference was unrepresentative of the event as a whole. The speaker at one session spoke sensibly of the need when teaching about Africa to avoid racist stereotypes, and to drop the "jungle" image of a diverse continent, only 5 percent of which is actual jungle. But at no session did I hear anything about interracial tolerance and understanding; at no

At a time when Afrocentric claims are said to point the way for American blacks, it is easy to forget that this vocal and radical cadre does not speak for all. Many blacks are well aware of problems in historiographic revisionism and "correct" terminology. Lest we forget, a large number of blacks subscribe to the view of Deborah Wright, a resident of Oakland, California, who wrote in a recent opinion piece for the Wall Street Journal:

★

The African-American label really represents an excuse—by reminding of a long time past, when blacks were slaves. The excuse rationalizes black failure in areas where other ethnic groups have succeeded. But the success of other ethnic groups stems in part from their strong belief in America. Black leaders foster the failure of black urban communities by providing excuses that defer responsibility.

The success in my life, as with most middle-class blacks from humble beginnings, comes from my strong belief in the American dream: If I work hard and become educated, then I will be successful.

I am the fifth of ten children from a poor Oklahoma family. The civil-rights movement of the 1960s made it possible for me to pursue a college education—previously not an option. I received a B.A. degree in social welfare, and worked in Los Angeles as a social worker for seven years. I have since worked in the computer industry. I have suffered much racial discrimination as a child and adult. These events do not affect my belief in myself and the Constitution that protects my rights. I have and must continue to overcome many obstacles and hardships to maintain myself and my 15-year-old son.

Adopting the label African-American is a major step backward. It places emphasis on differences—differences that foster conflict.

It is hard to understand that twenty-five years after the civil-rights movement, some black Americans are still searching for an identity. What does one hope to achieve by this exercise? We have been colored, Negro, Afro-American, black—and now African-American. Would it be OK to just be American?"

point support for American gains in cultural pluralism; or anything that argued that study of Africa was part of a broader ethic of awareness of the world as a whole. Reading the Portland essays for Afrocentric education, which are now the basis for reforms across the country, I found the same dogmatic reiteration of racial separatism and specious scholarship. The man who organized them and is on New York's curricular reform committee was standing on the podium during the enstoolment ceremony, smiling broadly.

Even if the scholarship were true, it's difficult to see the point of it all. The spirit is so ugly that even if it did generate racial pride, that pride would be synonymous with racial intolerance. And none of it addresses the pressing needs of young public high school kids, black and white, for a decent basic education or for genuine appreciation of black American history. It's sad enough, perhaps, that the educational establishment can turn a blind eye to this racism in its midst. But it's sadder still that what passes for an answer to the collapse of high school education these days is the institutionalization of hate.

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A CASE FOR PROGRESS: Textbooks Past and Present

One disturbing feature of the current storm over inclusion is that many ethnic advocates ignore or are unaware of the great advances that have occurred in social studies textbooks and curricula during the last decade.

Concerted efforts by publishers, scholars, and textbook reformers began to reshape the social studies—and more particularly the American history textbook—during the 1970s. As early as 1978, in the celebrated *New Yorker* magazine series published as *America Revised*, Frances FitzGerald registered these changes. During the 1980s, global studies received much attention in counterpoint to Western civilization courses. Today all major American and world histories for elementary and high school classes include new materials that avoid the narrow treatments of the past.

If we look back forty years, we can easily see just how far social studies textbooks have come in rethinking and dealing candidly with the past, even in primary grades. *My Country* (1948), a fifth grade textbook published by the state of California and used during the 1950s, provides a striking example. The book characterizes antebellum plantation life by saying:

> Perhaps the most fun the little masters and mistresses have comes when they are free to play with the little colored boys and girls. Back of the big house stand rows of small cabins. In these cabins live the families of Negro slaves. The older colored people work on the great farm, or help about the plantation home. The small black boys and girls play about the small houses. They are pleased to have the white children come to play with them.

In this section on colonial America, *My Country* gives no indication of how the slaves came to live in the rural southern provinces or of the chattel system that deprived slaves of their humanity. Much later, in explaining the advent of the Civil War, the book explains:

> The Negroes were brought from Africa and sold to the people of our country in early times. After a while there came to be thousands and thousands of these Negro slaves. Most of them were found in the southern states.... On the southern plantations, where tobacco and cotton and rice were grown, they work away quite cheerfully.
>
> In time many people came to think that it was wrong to own slaves. Some of them said that all the Negro slaves should be freed. Some of the people who owned slaves became angry at this. They said that the black people were better off as slaves in America than they would have been as wild savages in Africa. Perhaps this was true, as many of the slaves had snug cabins to live in, plenty to eat, and work that was not too hard for them to do. Most of the slaves seemed happy and contented.

These passages not only constitute histori-

ography that is offensive by today's standards. They also present bad history. *My Country* is not an evil book; many of its lessons contain the rich narrative passages and incorporate dramatic prose that textbook publishers have nearly abandoned in recent decades. *My Country* stands as evidence of progress in rethinking the past and what children should learn. If we remember that *My Country* was published by California forty-two years ago, and compare to it the book that the state adopted after much furor—coming in part from Afrocentric radicals—all Americans should be proud of increased accuracy and sensitivity in social studies books.

In 1990, California adopted Houghton Mifflin's *America Will Be* for fifth grade classes, a book developed under the direction of a respected historian of black history at the University of California at Los Angeles. *America Will Be* considers pluralism, the Middle Passage, plantation society, slavery and slave culture, abolitionism, and the advent of the Civil War, reflecting on the harsh lives of black people and the national divisions engendered by a loathsome institution, vitalized by an industrial revolution and King Cotton. Here is an excerpt:

> Most slaves lived in drafty, one-room cabins with dirt floors. Many times, two or more families would live together in one cabin. They slept on the ground on mattresses filled with cornhusks. Northup described his bed as "a plank 12 inches wide and 10 feet long." His pillow was a stick. Slaves wore shabby cotton or wool clothing, which was provided by the master twice a year. They ate pork fat, molasses, and cornmeal. Sometimes they could raise vegetables. But often the food did not have important nutrients.
>
> Most slaves worked in the fields, but a few had other jobs. House slaves cleaned, cooked, washed, sewed, and took care of children in the "big house," or plantation mansion. Their jobs were easier than working in the cotton or rice fields, but many house slaves suffered constant criticism from their watchful owners.

The Houghton Mifflin books are not alone in exploring the horrors of slavery and past discrimination. Fifth grade American histories recently published by Macmillan and D.C. Heath are not as extensive, well crafted, or as interesting as the Houghton Mifflin series. But they do present black history with some detail and finesse. Anyone who takes the time and effort to look at these elementary-level social studies books, much less compare them to earlier fare, should appreciate just how far instructional materials—and historiography—have come in recognizing past injustices and celebrating the multicultural nature of our country today.

Schoolbooks today are all multiethnic. Inclusion has happened, in some books more gracefully than in others, but it has happened. Not long ago, a French journalist reviewing the 1990 Houghton Mifflin social studies series expressed surprise that its world history books devote considerably more attention to old African kingdoms than the Renaissance. Black Americans do not have a monopoly on expanded subject matter. Publishers nowadays take enormous care to articulate the culture of American Indians, Pre-Columbians, Hispanics, and Asians, including their trials since the European global conquests of the sixteenth century.

G.S.

E PLURIBUS UNUM

Donald Kagan, dean of Yale College and Richard M. Colgate Professor of History and Classics, made these remarks as part of the welcoming Freshman Address to the Class of 1994.

Ethnic and racial diversity is not without its problems. Few governments and societies have been able to combine diversity with internal peace, harmony, freedom, and the unity required to achieve these goals. Perhaps the greatest success in ancient times was achieved by the Roman Empire, which absorbed a wide variety of peoples under a single government, generally tolerated cultural diversity, and gradually granted to all Roman citizenship, the rule of law, and equality before the law. But the Romans had imposed their rule over independent nations by force and maintained peace

and order by its threat. From the nations whose cultures they tolerated they did not create a single people; they did not and could not rely on the voluntary and enthusiastic participation in government and society of a unified population, as a modern democratic republic must....

In our time nationalism and ethnicity have emerged as immensely powerful forces, for good, but also for evil. Optimistic hopes for a diminution of differences among peoples and for a movement toward the unity of all mankind have been dashed as national and ethnic hostilities have played a major part in bringing on two terrible world wars. Even today they endanger the integrity of the Soviet Union and threaten peace both in Europe and Africa. They have brought inter-ethnic slaughter to Nigeria and all but destroyed the beautiful land of Lebanon.

From its origins the United States of America has faced a new challenge and opportunity. Its early settlers from the old world were somewhat diverse but had much in common. Most were British, spoke English, and practiced some form of Protestant Christianity. Before long, however, people of many different ethnic, religious, and national origins arrived with different cultural traditions, speaking various languages. Except for the slaves brought from Africa, most came voluntarily, as families and individuals, usually eager to satisfy desires that could not be met in their former homelands. They swiftly became citizens and, within a generation or so, Americans. In our own time finally, after too long a delay, African-Americans also have achieved freedom, equality before the law, and full citizenship.

People of different origins live side by side, often in ethnic communities, but never in enclaves of the country separated from other such enclaves. Although some inherit greater advantages than others, all are equal before the law, which does not recognize ethnic or other groups but only individuals. Each person is free to maintain old cultural practices, abandon them for ones found outside his ethnic group, or to create some mixture or combination.

Our country is not a nation like most others. "Nation" comes from the Latin word for birth: a nation is a group of people of common ancestry, a breed. Chinese, Frenchmen, and Swedes feel a bond that ties them to their compatriates as to a greatly extended family and provides the unity and commitment they need. But Americans do not share a common ancestry and a common blood. They and their forebears come from every corner of the earth. What they have in common and what brings them together is a system of laws and beliefs that shaped the establishment of the country, a system developed within the context of Western Civilization. It should be obvious, then, that all Americans need to learn about that civilization if we are to understand our country's origins, and share in its heritage, purposes, and character.

At present, however, the study of Western Civilization in our schools and colleges is under heavy attack. We are told that we should not give a privileged place in the curriculum to the great works of its history and literature. At the extremes of this onslaught the civilization itself, and therefore its study, is attacked because of its history of slavery, imperialism, racial prejudice, addiction to war, its exclusion of women and people not of the white race from its rights and privileges.

Some criticize its study as narrow, limiting, arrogant, and discriminatory, asserting that it has little or no value for those of different cultural origins. Others concede the value of the Western heritage but regard it as only one among many, all of which have equal claim to our attention. These attacks are unsound. It is both right and necessary to place Western Civilization and the culture to which it has given rise at the center of our studies, and we fail to do so at the peril of our students, our country, and of the hopes for a democratic, liberal society emerging throughout the world today.

In response to those who claim that Western culture is relevant only to a limited group it is enough to quote W.E.B. Du Bois, the African-American intellectual and political leader, writing at the turn of the century in a Jim Crow America:

> I sit with Shakespeare and he winces not. Across the color line I walk arm

> in arm with Balzac and Dumas, where smiling men and welcoming women glide in gilded halls. From out of the caves of evening that swing between the strong-limbed earth and the tracery of the stars, I summon Aristotle and Aurelius and what soul I will, and they come all graciously with no scorn or condescension. So, wed with Truth, I dwell above the veil.

For him the wisdom of the West's great writers was valuable for all, and he would not allow himself or others to be deprived of it because of the accident of race. Such was and is the view of the millions of people of both genders and every ethnic group who have personally experienced the value and significance of the Western heritage.

The assault on the character of the Western Civilization badly distorts history. Its flaws are real enough, but they are common to almost all the civilizations known on any continent at any time in human history. What is remarkable about the Western heritage and what makes it essential is the important ways in which it has departed from the common experience. More than any other it has asserted the claims of the individual against those of the state, limiting its power and creating a realm of privacy into which it cannot penetrate.

By means of the philosophical, scientific, agricultural, and industrial revolutions that have taken place in the West, human beings have been able to produce and multiply the things needed for life so as to make survival and prosperity possible for ever-increasing numbers, without rapacious wars and at a level that permits dignity and independence. It is the champion of representative democracy as the normal way for human beings to govern themselves, in place of the different varieties of monarchy, oligarchy, and tyranny that have ruled most of the human race throughout history and rule most of the world today. It has produced the theory and practice of the separation of church from state, thereby protecting each from the other and creating a free and safe place for the individual conscience.

At its core is a tolerance and respect for diversity unknown in most cultures. One of its most telling characteristics is its encouragement of criticism of itself and its ways. Only in the West can one imagine a movement to neglect the culture's own heritage in favor of some other. The university itself, a specially sheltered place for such self-examination, is a Western phenomenon only partially assimilated in other cultures.

My claim is that most of the sins and errors of Western Civilization are those of the human race. Its special achievements and values, however, are gifts to all humanity and are widely seen as such around the world today, although its authorship is rarely acknowledged. People everywhere envy not only its science and technology but also its freedom and popular government and the institutions that make them possible. Their roots are to be found uniquely in the experience and ideas of the West. Western culture and institutions are the most powerful paradigm in the world today. As they increasingly become the objects of emulation by peoples everywhere, their study becomes essential for those of all nations who wish to understand their nature and origins. How odd that Americans should choose this moment to declare it irrelevant, unnecessary, and even vicious.

THE COMING VIDEODISK REVOLUTION

In November, the Texas Board of Education sent a strong signal to textbook publishers. The state adopted the first videodisk-based curriculum in elementary science, thereby establishing an alternative to printed textbooks in classroom instructional materials and bringing a new technology into national focus. This adoption comprises a radical alteration in school publishing materials.

Before, videodisks remained at the margin of supplementary materials. School systems in Texas will now be able to purchase videodisks with state textbook money. Not only was this videodisk option adopted by the state; the Texas board has now opened future adoptions to electronic publishers. Because of its large population and state-based adoption, Texas is a traditional bellwether for textbook innova-

tion. The state has long influenced instructional materials in all subjects thoughout the country. Other states will undoubtedly give videodisk systems a closer look in the near future.

The program that was adopted, called "Windows on Science," was developed by Optical Data Corporation of Warren, New Jersey. It will now compete with standard textbooks for a piece of the $40 million elementary-school science textbook market in Texas. It is estimated that Optical Data will capture 30 to 35 percent of the market when individual school districts purchase new instructional materials during the 1991-1992 school year.

"Windows on Science" contains 3,000 pages of study guides and teacher materials, including colorful charts, diagrams, still photographs, motion pictures, and lessons spoken in English or Spanish. It also includes printed materials and workbooks, partly to counteract the criticism that videodisks are inherently against reading. The estimated cost of the videodisk program is approximately $20 per pupil, about the same cost as a standard textbook. The laser players cost an additional $400 to $600.

Increasingly, educators brush against new technologies that are almost certain to revolutionize instructional materials during the coming decade. Many of them are comfortable with this prospect, sensing the opportunities that computers and CD-ROM (compact disk/read-only-memory videodisks) hardware might bring to classrooms in the 1990s.

Not all of these high-tech developments are to be welcomed, as in the case of the Whittle Communications satellite-delivered television "news" shows, replete with advertisements, which are now functioning in over 4,000 schools nationwide. Educators should also be on alert when new hardware and software are promoted as educational panaceas and learning tools that will render textbooks obsolete. The fantastic McLuhanesque claims of techno-enthusiasts are wishful thinking, an old quest for a perfect and painless system of learning.

Some simple explanations are in order to demystify CD-ROM. Interactive videodisks store immense amounts of information—textual and pictorial—that people can call up and move through at will by means of an index. The flexibility in information retrieval is enormous, although like with all information systems, garbage in, garbage out; obviously, a videodisk can be only as good as the information and index that electronic publishers produce.

The centerpiece is a laser-based device similar to a compact-disk player. This is the hardware on which videodisks are played, thrown up on television monitors by an individual using the system like an encyclopedia or a class using it for audio-visual display. Videodisk platters are capable of recording sound, storing texts, still photographs, and videoprograms. Each disk holds as many as 108,000 distinct pictures or half an hour of movies. (Moving video images require far more memory than text or stills.)

Some promising videodisks are being developed for use in the social studies. The National Geographic Society is introducing a new videodisk curriculum in United States history and geography. This new videodisk is aimed at seventh to twelfth graders, and advance reports indicate that it is of high quality. Another acclaimed videodisk developed at Bowdoin College called the "Perseus Project" contains comprehensive reference materials for an introduction to classical Greece.

Critics of videodisk series argue that this kind of electronic teaching undercuts student ability to read. Those who suspect that pictorial presentation by electronic media shortens attention spans and intellectual patience have cause to be alarmed. It is well documented that the nation's literacy problems are rooted in part in television. Printed materials from newspapers to textbooks try increasingly to be "television competitive." Reading a textbook is not as much fun—or as easy—as watching. It is difficult for a show, even a good one, to develop and present the necessary layers of complexity and subtlety that can be done so gracefully in the pages of a book.

Perhaps videodisks are especially pertinent to introductory courses in science and social studies, where challenging and potentially dry subject matter can be made vivid. On the other

hand, it is doubtful that interactive videodisks will soon replace traditional textbooks in core elementary subjects such as reading and mathematics.

NOTED WITH INTEREST

★ A new National Endowment for the Humanities report called *Tyrannical Machines*, written by NEH chairman Lynne V. Cheney, reviews "educational practices gone wrong and our best hopes for setting them right." During her tenure Cheney has already performed an important public service in cautioning repeatedly against the devaluation of the humanities through classroom politics.

Her newest report provides a candid and readable programmatic outline for educational reform. The title comes from William James' 1903 remark that "institutionizing on a large scale of any natural combination of need and motive" tends to create a "tyrannical Machine with unforeseen powers of exclusion and corruption." In other words, systemic rigidities in education have such power that exposing the "multitude of ways they violate good sense" does little to change the way schools and colleges work. Among Cheney's complaints are textbooks. "We continue to teach history with history that drains all drama out of the past," she writes. "Textbooks often fail to give sufficient attention to the story of how democratic institutions have evolved." Cheney recommends that basal readers and social studies texts be developed that are less boring and bland than the ones currently used. In addition, she cites the promise of alternative instructional materials, including those being developed by the NEH-sponsored National Center for History in Schools at the University of California at Los Angeles.

Cheney thus joins the cadre of noted education analysts who have registered identical complaints and see in the revision of instructional materials the opportunity for rapid and cost-effective educational improvement. *Tyrannical Machines* is available free from the Office of Publications and Public Affairs, National Endowment for the Humanities, 1100 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20506.

★ In February, the California State Department of Education plans to publish an annotated bibliography of historical literature for children in kindergarten through eighth grade. It will contain about 1,300 titles of trade books, old and new, appropriate for use as supplementary or alternative reading in classrooms. School librarians should take note of this comprehensive and unique guide, which constitutes the most complete compilation of social studies-related books for young students.

★ The National Society for the Study of Education has published *Textbooks and Schooling in the United States*, edited by David L. Elliot and Arthur Woodward and distributed by the University of Chicago Press. This new anthology considers the history of instructional materials, the mechanics of writing, editing, and selling textbooks; the fevered politics of school-oriented publishing and marketing; and even alternative technologies to textbooks. The editors conclude that textbook programs "constitute a virtual national curriculum in the basic subjects for public elementary and junior high schools" and that textbooks "have persisted as major structurers of school programs" in spite of sixty years of educational reform movements. They have grave doubts about the textbook publishing industry's ability to function as a national curriculum authority and call for increased local development of instructional materials. Given the increased need for a wide range of instructional resources, they admit, constructive changes will be difficult. Still, Elliot and Woodward have hope in emerging computer technologies that may soon allow teachers to customize lesson plans and classroom materials. Still, the editors reiterate the probability of textbooks' continued presence in classrooms. For those with a scholarly interest in textbook publishing and development, not only in the field of social studies, *Textbooks and Schooling in the United States* provides the most sophisticated analytical overview in years.

★ With sadness we report the deaths of two recent contributors to the *Social Studies Review*, Lucy S. Dawidowicz and Roald Dahl. Dawidowicz was not only the nation's most accomplished historian of the Holocaust. She

was a warm and energetic woman whose razor-sharp mind and interest in European affairs remained intense to the end. Roald Dahl may not have always been an easy man, but he had an uncanny ability to capture the hearts and minds of children through books. "The content of a children's book is basically unimportant. The sole purpose of that book is to convince the child that reading is great fun. The book must be so exciting and funny and wonderful that the child falls in love with it. Then the battle is won and the realization that books are easy and lovely and enthralling begins to dawn on the young reader," he noted in the *Review*. "There need be no message in the book, no moral, just sheer entertainment. Not all writers for children or indeed the critics have come to terms with this simple truth." Dawidowicz and Dahl will be missed.

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THE BILL OF RIGHTS

The Bill of Rights may be the most revered element of the Constitution. It embodies cherished, fundamental individual and state rights that help define the American political idea. It incorporates a host of political concepts from free speech and separation of church and state to due process, probable cause, and double jeopardy.

In December 1791, the new nation declared the first ten amendments in force. Two hundred years later, American citizens dearly hold onto this counterforce to and protection against tyranny. This Bill of Rights provides much power to people on a range of issues involving individual expectations and public control. But its components raise as many questions as answers. Among much else the Bill of Rights allows citizens to own handguns, avoid torture and police brutality, publish pornography, and obtain money when a new interstate highway goes through the family house. These are all legacies of what was two hundred years ago a truly revolutionary idea. No constitutional element is more fundamental to the Enlightenment's philosophical taste, idea of republican rule, and interest in natural law than such a formal arrangement of "rights."

During the creation of the United States, the debate was as central as it is today. At the end of the Constitutional Convention of 1787, a strong call for such amended guarantees—coming from anti-federalists who distrusted and feared central authority—set the stage for their enactment. To some of the Founders, it seemed clear that a bill was necessary and inevitable in order to ensure ratification. James Madison and others who navigated the Bill of Rights through the Congress and state legislatures wanted to draw special attention to the enumeration of rights as a particular and discrete constitutional unit. The final Bill of Rights, presented as ten separate amendments, while imperfect to the

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designers, was incorporated into the Constitution, as Madison said, "to satisfy the public mind that their liberties will be perpetual."

Thus, these rights, henceforth called "inalienable," serve as a warning to governors from the governed that people know what rights are due them, and that infrigements will not be tolerated or ceded lightly. "From the beginning, it seems, the language of America has been the language of rights," Philip B. Kurland and Ralph Lerner have noted in *The Founders' Constitution*.

A widely held sense of what the Bill of Rights is and what it protects does not mitigate the arguments and controversies that occur over the essence of its guarantees. For this very reason, the document remains of extraordinary interest to scholars, teachers, and students. Its importance is matched by sharp public concern about interpretation and case law, including rights that extend beyond the Bill of Rights itself.

Educators should consider how they can effectively present and teach the Bill of Rights. First, their complexity should be acknowledged. An inalienable right to one group can be anathema for another, as shown in endless and unsatisfactory attempts to address the intersection of religion and education. Today, many people are invested in the doctrine of ever-expanding rights. The suggestion that there could be horrifying public consequences if that doctrine were taken to the maximum appears to them as a threat to the liberal idea itself.

An easy absolutism can creep into popular interpretations of rights, easy because it conveniently sidesteps the necessary task of defining limits to personal freedom. (It also often allows the proponent a chance to be mock-heroic and self-righteous.) Teaching the Bill of Rights should try to inscribe perimeters around thorny rights, including speech and religion, due process, privacy, and state power.

When we say the Bill of Rights, often we just mean the First Amendment. And indeed, in this issue of the *Social Studies Review*, we stress these freedoms, not at the expense of related and important constitutional ideas. Such issues as speech and due process are so intertwined with educational policy that they need to be stressed; civics and government textbooks tend to emphasize this particular amendment, and they naturally devote considerable attention to rights.

This issue of the *Review* contains two major essays on the Bill of Rights, one that attempts to explain the significance these amendments in public life and to provide some direction for their study, and another that reviews the adequacy of First Amendment coverage in four leading government textbooks. Such examinations seem especially timely at a moment when freedom of speech on campus has become one of the most prominent issues in the academy and schools today. An increasing number of scholars of different intellectual persuasions are concerned by the issue of academic freedom in the classroom. They worry about the creation of campus climates "in which professors who value their reputations and their perquisites learn to censor themselves," as the historian Eugene D. Genovese recently put the situation, referring to curricular "terrorists" and "storm troopers" intent on silencing professors and others who hold views that they consider "insensitive."

Censorship is a word often misused, or loosely used, certainly inside the world of textbooks. Across the country citizens assemble and speak out against textbooks in their state or locality that they consider inaccurate, noxious, or evil. They attempt to prevent their use in schools. Lest we forget, such efforts have gone on for a long time. Correctly, censorship means the examination and suppression of objectionable material for moral, political, or military reasons. Obviously, the First Amendment makes formal censorship a difficult affair.

Some conservatives contend that a tacit censorship enters into the textbook editing process, resulting in distorted coverage of women, minorities, environmental activism, and other social studies du jour. The *Review* asserts that any such bias is responsive, not conspiratorial or misleading, and that it is not censorship at all. Censorship involves actual suppression of speech and image by a public or quasi-public institution. Most bias in textbooks is unconcious—a matter of fashion and appeasement. Social studies textbook

publishers, weary souls, go along with the tide, wherever curricular and ideological trends might turn.

Some kinds of textbook suppression are considered more heinous than others. Since the rise of Mel and Norma Gabler in Texas during the 1970s, fundamentalists have borne the brunt of criticism in trying to obtain textbooks that align with their beliefs and interpretation of the past. This continues. On its March 1991 cover the *American School Board Journal* blared "censorship is back at the books." The *Journal* singled out fundamentalist Christians as repressive elements in the world of instructional materials. In western towns from Yucaipa, California, to Walla Walla, Washington, during the last year, Christian parents have mounted ill-advised campaigns against the Harcourt Brace Jovanovich *Impressions* elementary reading series, unfairly accusing the texts of containing morbid, even satanic stories and images that undermine morality.

It would have been useful if the *Journal* had decided to think of the *Impressions* issue—and textbook censorship—broadly, not as a fundamentalist crusade but as part of a multivalent effort among assorted malcontents to impose their particular view or cause upon all. Why didn't the *Journal* bother to include many other intrusions on free speech such as recent political efforts to block the social studies textbook adoption in California during the last year? A flood of angry, irresponsible charges about the curriculum and recommended texts came mainly from ethnic, sexual, and religious activists who wanted to remake the past to advance their own idealized social order. Why just pick on the fundamentalists? The fiercest new censors are coming from other places on the cultural map.

At least in metropolitan regions—and the 1990 census has shown us that the United States is overwhelmingly a metropolitan nation—the many-splendored thing called multiculturalism is a far more potent force in the curriculum than fundamentalism. For this reason and others this issue of the *Review* returns to the subject and considers some recent events in the minefields of culture, paying particular attention to the Columbus Quincentenary and the controversies therein.

WHAT THE BILL OF RIGHTS MEANS

By Milton Meltzer

Do you know what's in the Bill of Rights? It may sound like a foolish question. Many Americans claim they venerate this document and believe deeply in the wisdom of the Founding Fathers who conceived it. Yet, when they are asked to tell what the major provisions of the Bill of Rights are, they rarely get it right.

For some fifty years now the Gallup and other polls have made surveys of public opinion on this question. The results are astonishing—and sad. A large percentage of those queried have only the vaguest notion of the historic document. Worse, when the pollsters put into somewhat different words the essence of each of those rights, an alarming percentage of people say they disapprove of those rights.

Consider what could happen to Americans if they lacked the protection of the Bill of Rights. A few examples make the point: You publicly criticize the president, or you picket the White House, and you land in jail. The Congress decides to make a particular religion the official one and you, who believe in a different faith, are not allowed to practice it. Property you own is taken away from you without compensation, on the grounds that the property is needed for some public purpose. The police, without warrant, enter your home to search your possessions and take whatever they choose.

The historical circumstances that led to the creation of certain rights go back to the Magna Carta, when barons forced upon King John certain liberties. The great charter was a grant, in sixty-three clauses, of certain rights and privileges that the king pledged to observe. By defining the law, the charter limited the king's power. Now there was law, and law means recognized procedures, procedures that even a king must follow. So, in the Magna Carta can be found the root of the principle that there are fundamental laws that operate above any reigning government. And the state, though it otherwise has sovereign power, may not infringe upon those fundamental rights.

Any introduction to the Bill of Rights

should provide this kind of historical background, stressing the clash of social, economic, and political forces and the play of personality in leadership of the contending parties that shaped the evolution of our rights. For example, the primary aim of the barons in pressuring King John was to protect their own interests. But because they needed support outside their class, they provided for other people's interests too.

No one wants students to think our rights were conjured magically into being without human intervention. Nor should students be led to believe that people at any period in history agree unanimously about the merits of one action or another. History is not necessarily a march of progress. Take the 1830s, when abolitionists, black and white, began to make stirring use of the spoken and written word to rally support for the overthrow of slavery. Yet from the earliest moments the harshest means were used to stifle anti-slavery voices, censor publications, wreck presses, cripple organizations, and jail or murder leaders.

The right to dissent, of course, offers dramatic examples of conflict. But there have been many changes in American life in the two hundred years since ratification of the Bill that have affected our constitutional rights. The rise of industrial unions in the 1930s caused the country, the Congress, and the courts to rethink the position on the right of labor to organize and bargain collectively. This too came to be interpreted as a civil liberty—though beyond the exact purview of the First Amendment—when great strikes in basic industries erupted.

Through consideration of the Bill of Rights, students may come to a deeper understanding of such simple phrases as "freedom of speech" and "freedom of religion." They should realize how citizens, the executive, the legislative, and the judiciary are influenced by their prejudices, their politics, and their passions—all shaping the interpretation and application of the Bill of Rights. People have suffered time and again for holding contrary opinions to those in power and for trying to express them. In the 1950s, people were summoned before investigating committees of the Congress and state legislatures and grilled on their political beliefs. Infringed were their First Amendment right to hold unpopular beliefs and Fifth Amendment right not to testify against themselves.

The study of the Bill of Rights should help prepare students to think critically about how individuals and groups behave in society, and about the meaning of citizenship and community. That they are badly in need of such help was demonstrated recently in "The Age of Indifference," the report sponsored by the Times Mirror Foundation, which showed a dismaying decline of knowledge of, or interest in, public affairs among the young.

What young people see going on around them is often in conflict with the bland material fed them in textbooks and classrooms. Their personal experience of life frequently has nothing to do with the written or spoken word in school. A sense of civic responsibility and the skills to act effectively in the political realm is hardly encouraged by neutered texts and passive instruction.

In classrooms across the country, imaginative teachers can encourage a range of student projects to bring great Bill of Rights issues alive. Students can borrow from the library a number of books dealing with the Bill of Rights, comparing their differences of interpretation. Students can take a transcript of a court case linked to the Bill of Rights and dramatize it before the class. Of special interest to students is the area of freedom of the student press. Student editors can discuss in class the methods of responsible reporting, and how to handle editorial opinion, aiming to foster accuracy and separation between news and views. Similarly, examples of sloppy or biased journalism in the student or local press can be analyzed.

Whatever the method, teachers should remember the following. In the Bill of Rights there are only 462 words. Yet, as Chief Justice Earl Warren once said, it is "the most precious part of our legal heritage." That heritage stands for two fundamental principles. One is that in the American political system the majority rules through electoral democracy. The other—expressed in the first ten amendments—is that though we are a democracy, the rule of the majority must be limited so that individual liberty is guaranteed.

It is the second principle that people tend to forget or overlook. It is not as well understood as it ought to be. And it is very fragile. Our rights are really limits on democratic power. They protect us from tyranny by the government itself. When citizens have the right to worship where and how they please, to organize political parties, and to distribute leaflets, it means the government has no legal authority to stop them.

The Bill of Rights is put to hard tests. When America goes into war or a fierce domestic conflict erupts, our constitutional liberties can be easily threatened. Whether during the cold war between France and the United States in the early 1800s or during the cold war between the Soviet Union and the United States in the 1950s, or in situations such as the Civil War of the 1860s or the "rights revolution" of the 1960s, tensions over the Bill of Rights have repeatedly surfaced.

In tense times, a climate of fear and anger coupled to topical events may confuse constitutional protections and blur perspective. Forgotten may be the idea that in a constitutional democracy, when one group or faction commands more votes than another, it cannot be allowed to trample on minorities' rights.

The courts stand as safeguards against laws that go beyond the government's limited authority. The Supreme Court, above all, has the duty "to apply to ever changing conditions the never changing principles of freedom," as Justice Warren put it. There is, however, no assurance of steady growth. The range of constitutionally protected freedoms expands in some periods, contracts in others. The meaning of traditional freedoms changes as society changes in the course of history.

The Constitution, valued as highly as it is, is only a piece of paper. It does nothing by itself. The Bill of Rights declares what our civil liberties are. But it does not carry out its commands. It takes the action of citizens to enforce our rights. Without an alert public, a critical press, and concerted political action, the safeguards our liberties provide can never be taken for granted.

Milton Meltzer is the author of many well-known children's books and histories.

FOUR AMERICAN GOVERNMENT TEXTBOOKS AND THE FIRST AMENDMENT: A Review

By Paul Murphy

Civics for Americans. John J. Patrick and Richard C. Remy. Scott, Foresman, 1986.
Magruder's American Government. Prentice Hall, 1990.
Government in America. Richard J. Hardy. Houghton Mifflin, 1990.
Government by the People: Bill of Rights Edition. James M. Burns, J. W. Peltason, and Thomas E. Cronin. Prentice Hall, 1990.

In arguing for adding a Bill of Rights to the Federal Constitution, James Madison, attempting to encapsulate popular demand, told the first Congress: "if these rights are incorporated into the Constitution, independent tribunals of justice will consider themselves in a peculiar manner the guardians of those rights; they will be an impenetrable bulwark against every assumption of power in the Legislative or Executive; they will be naturally led to resist every encroachment upon rights expressly stipulated for in the Constitution by the declaration of rights."

The Bill of Rights proves to be highly popular with students, partly because the material has the potential for self-identification. As Americans shaped by their political and legal environment, they take for granted that the many Bill of Rights guarantees are in some way sacred—a vital part of the country's public value system—to be protected by government, and especially by the courts. By far, students feel most passionately about the history, role, and impact of First Amendment guarantees.

These First Amendment rights seem instinctively to be the "preferred freedoms," to borrow a term from liberal Justices Hugo Black and William Douglas after 1940. Indeed, to Black, not only were First Amendment freedoms "preferred." They were the "foundation upon which our government structure rests," and as such were "America's central cultural symbol."

It is easy to wonder how well students understand the qualifications at work in the

First Amendment area, that is, the fragile nature of such liberties and the larger social issues that swirl around them. If students agree, as most seem to do, that judicial mandate is desirable as the best protection of rights, do they comprehend the implications of Woodrow Wilson's statement? The Constitution, he said in 1908, is "a vehicle of life, and its spirit is always the spirit of the age." If so, do they also appreciate that the Court moves backward as well as forward with the times, and is made up of a wide spectrum of essentially subjective justices, some of whom condone broad permissibility in the exercise of First Amendment liberties, while others clearly do not? Furthermore, do they understand that the latter have strong reasons for their more limited application, reasons which include a hearty skepticism toward excessive judicial activism?

If one is to understand the court's role in First Amendment freedoms, how much do students need first understand aspects of judicial procedure: how landmark "rights" cases get to the Supreme Court, the role that doctrine plays, and for that matter, the role that court debate and dissent play in judicial fine-tuning of the legal provisions on which particular cases turn? For students really to understand the First Amendment freedoms, shouldn't they also be informed of the impact of the interpretation of the courts, the degree of compliance achieved, and the social result? Has American politics, for one example, been more reflective of the popular will since the Supreme Court, in *New York Times v. Sullivan* in 1964, ruled that "debate on public issues should be uninhibited, robust, and wide-open"?

Let us consider how four leading government texts used nationally in secondary grades cover the First Amendment, and how successfully they do it. The most basic is John J. Patrick and Richard C. Remy's text, *Civics for Americans*, designed for the social studies genre called "civics," as distinct from "American government." Civics courses run a broad curricular gamut from seventh to twelfth grade, so *Civics for Americans* must pitch elementary ideas about government toward a broad audience. The authors treat First Amendment issues under the general heading, "Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship," making clear at the outset that freedom of speech, for example, is a qualified right. The book then explores how Americans use free speech; and in two quick pages discusses the limits to free speech, contrasting American rights with those in the communist world, although recent current events partially diminish the utility of the comparison.

Civics for Americans fails to list or highlight any landmark First Amendment cases, although in a different context the text considers *Des Moines v. Tinker*, the celebrated 1969 students rights case. Likewise, it tips its hat to *Schenck v. U.S.*, which first set forth the "clear and present danger" test for free speech's limits, and *Gitlow v. New York*, which first applied federal speech protection to the states. The book ignores the freedom of the press, religious freedom, and the rights of assembly and petition.

The writing is simple, direct and accurate. But the book is extremely limited in its coverage. More specific examples and case law are needed. The text makes clear that judges try to weigh the interest of the community against the rights of the individual and seek to balance a person's right to speak freely with the community's needs for order, stability, and safety. Why are there no examples?

Magruder's American Government is the standard and best-selling American government text, in print for an incredible seventy-two years, and something of a classic in this area of the curriculum. Widely called Magruder, the book clearly aims at a more advanced secondary level than *Civics for Americans* and goes to the opposite extreme, since in every area of constitutional study, the student is flooded with a laundry list of cases.

Devoting thirty pages to the First Amendment, Magruder begins with "Our System of Civil Rights," under which it places both civil rights and civil liberties, turning them around a concept of limited government. Here the text is contradictory. It states that as early as 1833, in *Barron v. Baltimore*, the Court held that the provisions of the Bill or Rights restricted only the national government and "The Court has followed this holding ever since." The next page points out that the Court has "nationalized" the Bill of Rights starting in the 1920s

THE BILL OF RIGHTS

The first ten amendments to the Constitution, called the Bill of Rights, were declared in force on December 15, 1791 by the new United States government, then located in New York City.

AMENDMENT I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

AMENDMENT II

A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed.

AMENDMENT III

No soldier shall, in time of peace, be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

AMENDMENT IV

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

AMENDMENT V

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a grand jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service in time of war or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

AMENDMENT VI

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the state and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.

AMENDMENT VII

In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of a trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury shall be otherwise reexamined in any court of the United States than according to the rules of the common law.

AMENDMENT VIII

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

AMENDMENT IX

The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

AMENDMENT X

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people.

with *Gitlow*, so that the states clearly now are confined by the same federal restrictions which limit the national authority. Magruder later treats freedom of expression in the areas of religion, speech and press, national security, and assembly and petition. But here too, unfortunately, tedious lists of cases, briefly noted and described, predominate.

Again, Magruder could be more clear about how the courts translate such popular issues into legal "shorthand" in quest for legal solution, and how the moral and ethical dimensions of cases are handled through the adjudicatory process. A section on Christmas displays of the Holy Family, under "Separation of Church and State," for example, helps illuminate, although very briefly, how such displays are seen by some as endorsing Christian doctrine, thereby violating the First and Fourteenth Amendments. On the other hand, the interplay within the Court over this issue is absent.

In the "Free Exercise of Religion" segment, the student again encounters rampant and boring case lists. Magruder ranges from Mormon polygamy to recent issues of whether state unemployment compensation laws bar benefits to those who leave jobs voluntarily for religious reasons. The segment is not chronologically organized, however, so students get little sense of why issues of this kind surface at different times and what the ultimate outcome of interpretation is, particularly as applied in subsequent cases.

On speech and press, Magruder makes a brief attempt to make clear purposes and limitations. But again, the book seems in a hurry to get down to extended case law in the areas of obscenity, prior restraint, confidentiality, motion pictures, radio and television, symbolic speech, and advertising. Granted, such wide-ranging coverage gives students a smattering of information. Yet, the net result seems lawyerish, coming up with what the Supreme Court had said here, what the Supreme Court had said there, with little evaluation of the consistency—or inconsistency—of its evolving doctrine, and certainly with very little indication of questions of compliance and social results.

In other words, the nexus between people seeking a solution to a public policy dilemma, and the effort to achieve a judicial solution, to say nothing of its success or failure, is not clearly or firmly addressed. Further, for assembly and petition, we learn about "time, place, manner" regulations, demonstrations on public property, and the right of assembly on private property, with impact largely ignored.

The purpose of Magruder's section on the First Amendment is hard to discern. Few students are capable of memorizing several dozen cases and what the Supreme Court has said in each, and then, to what end? Given the rapidity with which the Court doctrine changes in the First Amendment area, close description of a few landmark cases, coupled to an explanation of the evolution of constitutional law, is to be preferred. A better understanding of basic process, and its various dimensions, rather than extended case coverage, would leave students with a clearer picture of the meaning of what is taking place.

Richard J. Hardy's *Government in America* is a fresher and better American government text. Like other books, it tries to project ideological neutrality. It sets forth a series of questions, quite succinctly stated, then turns to case "answers" to make clear how the courts wrestled out a position vis-a-vis the appropriate clause in the Constitution. The book stresses key cases, even treating some in detail, spelling out in a number of instances the guidelines the Court set up for determining future cases in the area.

In commenting on the establishment of religion, for example, useful material on political efforts to try to reverse judicial policy is present. As to the Flag Salute cases, the text makes clear that the first *Minersville School District v. Gobilitis* (1940) was widely criticized by legal scholars and the media for violating students' freedom of conscience, leading the court to reverse itself in a second case three years later.

In the area of free speech, encouragingly, the book works from principles of free speech to limits on free speech, with some historical sequencing, making clear that the latter have shifted from time to time as public pressures waxed and waned. The same approach works well with regard to press and assembly. And there is a healthy candor in *Government in*

Educators who scan state adoption lists and publishers' catalogues to try to identify their options for American government textbooks will probably never see what may be the best high school text available. That's because, first, George McKenna's *The Drama of Democracy* is technically a college text. But the book is pitched at all curious students, using vivid language and examples that—not an easy task—bring civics and government alive. High school students of average or superior ability will be able to comprehend its content and will welcome the text's zesty style. To cite only one example, in the midst of a refreshing interpretative tour through the Bill of Rights, McKenna writes: "The Third Amendment has a slightly antique quality. It forbids the quartering of troops in people's homes without their permission. In the 1990s we seem to have more than enough military bases for quartering our troops." Regarding curtailment of freedom of speech, he says, "Every dictator knows this: First shut people up, then you can do what you want." In short, the book has voice, intelligence, and even wit. In the world of trade books, it might find an audience of different ages. But in the stratified world of school and college textbooks, this is not likely. Second, *The Drama of Democracy* is published by Dushkin Publishing Group, a respected niche publisher, but a company that simply cannot compete with the titanic marketing and distribution machines of the six or so major textbook publishers in social studies. But as McKenna himself notes with good nature and balance, had he gone to a huge textbook house instead of a small publisher, he would not have had the freedom to create such an intelligent and informing textbook.

America on the Supreme Court's tendency to swing back and forth on account of public pressure and altered membership, changing the Court's orientation from time to time.

In contrast, *Government by the People*, by James M. Burns, J. W. Peltason, and Thomas E. Cronin, widely used in Advanced Placement and college-level courses, assumes a certain preliminary knowledge in civics. It has more sophistication regarding the purpose of various clauses. In the free speech area, the authors, for example, discuss three historic tests which the Court has gone through—bad tendency, clear and present danger, preferred freedom—resulting in complex doctrines that the Supreme Court then is apt to use to measure the limits of government power.

Such material anticipates a later Constitutional Law course but is necessarily too complex for younger or less able students. The book moves on through subjects such as free press and fair trial, commercial speech, libel, obscenity, fighting words, with similar broad kinds of categories for petition, assembly, and the recently evolved rights of association. The discussion of each is more detailed, but even here comprehension would be greater if more examples were included of the legal and judicial process at work. Again, it would be desirable if the text placed more emphasis on the outcome of rulings—whether compliance, defiance, or attempts at legislative reversal. This book, and others, should consider the way the public and its leaders viewed outcomes and mandates, and the extent to which the Court, in subsequent cases, responded to public approval or disapproval.

If, as Justice Black argued, freedom of expression is our "central cultural symbol," we have an obligation to our students to make clear not only why this is so but also their responsibility for seeing that this continues. The interrelationship between the First Amendment and a successful and ongoing democratic process is great. But despite James Madison's hopes, the judiciary can not do it alone.

Educators must nurture popular appreciation of the importance of these rights. They must also stress their dynamism and mutability. The best sustenance in this regard is accurate and sympathetic understanding of the missions, roles, and meanings of our First Amendment freedoms.

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THE MULTICULTURE WATCH

Cicero and Alexander Pope are out. So are Dante and Locke. They are dead you-know-whats. The intricate debate over multiculturalism and interpretation of the humanities persists. Multiculturalism is the subject in social studies and the whole academy that refuses to move toward the margin. During the last few months *The New York Review of Books*, *The New Republic*, *The Atlantic*, *The New York Times*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *New York* magazine have all featured the subject in varying ways. What is important, all these publications register grave reservations about curricular escapades in schools and colleges that increasingly seem linked to thought control and political advocacy.

In the December 6 issue of *The New York Review of Books*, University of California at Berkeley philosopher John Searle criticized the new academic world where the history of Western Civilization is taken to be a history of oppression of women, various slave and serf populations, and ethnic and cultural minorities generally. "The so-called canon of Western civilization consists in the official publications of this system of oppression," Searle wrote. According to cultural radicals, he noted, it "has to be abolished in favor of something that is 'multicultural' and 'nonhierarchical.'"

Searle thus signaled to the nation's high-minded literati and upper professoriate that all was not harmonious in the curriculum and campus ethos. Moreover, he asserted the main violations of taste and free inquiry were coming from self-proclaimed scholar-activists on the cultural left. In essence, he reminded us that Allan Bloom's much vituperated against *The Closing of the American Mind* made some valid points about an emerging "politically correct" orthodoxy.

In February, *The New Republic*'s editors dismissed multiculturalism more tartly:

> "multiculturalism" holds that the traditional idea of free thought is an illusion propagated by the spoilers of freedom, by the relations of power that obtain in any given society. It holds, more specifically, that the old liberal notion of freedom is only a sentimental mask of a power structure that is definitionally oppressive of those who are not white Western males. And this ideological and methodological principle is not merely a cautionary note to be taken into account when studying the established texts of Western civilization; it is, in the hands of the "multiculturalists," the very meaning of—the deepest truth about—those texts.

Thus, the editorial continued, in the view of group- or cause-minded obsessives on campus: "The university should therefore be devoted to blowing the whistle on those texts, to replacing them with those that identify and transcend this white male oppression, and indeed go beyond mere study to the actual defeat of the racial and sexual structure of society at large."

It is not suprising that multicultural activists and others who think of themselves as preternaturally "sensitive" in cultural affairs may feel betrayed by commentaries like Searle's and *The New Republic*'s. The criticism is coming from the liberal magisterium. It won't do to blow it off as fascist or pig-brained.

Increasingly, the monitoring of obligatory public attitudes on campus disturb sensible people allergic to intellectual bullies. "What the 'multiculturalist' criticism of the canon fails to grasp is that the canon is itself a cacophony, that it teaches not certainty but doubt, that it presents not a single Western doctrine about the true or the good or the beautiful, but an internecine Western war between different accounts of those values," *The New Republic* editorial concluded.

Weasel words like *multiculturalism*, *self-esteem*, *canon*, *sensitivity*, and *diversity* are no longer shining verbal talismans. Nonetheless, the idea of a sinister, inherently corrupt, and exploitative European culture has many friends in positions of curricular power and influence, for example, in the New York state department of education and the Portland, Detroit, and Washington, D.C. schools.

Welcome winds of reason are prevailing in some urban areas. On March 4, the Los Angeles unified school district—comprised of over 600,000 students, 63 percent of whom are Hispanic and 87 percent nonwhite—allowed local schools to purchase the contro-

versial Houghton Mifflin series. This local action signals the deserved victory of California's social studies textbook reform effort, which has involved the state department of education, historians and educators, and publishing executives over a five-year period.

Readers of the *Review* will remember that these Houghton Mifflin books were adopted by the state last October after concerted efforts by group activists to trash the books on account of their alleged Eurocentrism, religious and ethnic insensitivity, exclusion of homosexual biography, and more. What readers may not know is that the battle against this series has continued at the local level. The Los Angeles school board, departing from its usual practice of permitting schools to decide for themselves whether or not to buy state-approved texts, reviewed the series in response to complaints. The unanimous vote in favor of the series leaves activists twisting in the wind and their orchestrated attack on California's effort to improve the history curriculum and social studies textbooks in shambles. Los Angeles is a larger textbook market than a majority of states.

Los Angeles' decision may suggest the centrist character of the nation at large, even in areas where there are nonwhite majorities in the public schools. This textbook action is important and good news from the nation's second largest school district, and a district that is truly multicultural in composition. California's experience proves that curricular extremists cannot be satisfied, since they are invested in conflict and confrontation. But the state has also demonstrated that cultural anger, group intimidation, and flimsy kinds of historical revisionism do not necessarily sway steady minds.

GREAT BOOKS OF THE NON-WESTERN WORLD: Toward An Authentic Multiculturalism

By Dinesh D'Souza

Dinesh D'Souza is the author of Illiberal Education, *a new and acclaimed book on higher education, the place where most ideas in schools originate. In the passage below, excerpted with permission from an article in the Spring 1991 issue of* Policy Review, *D'Souza explains what a truly multicultural humanities curriculum might strive for, then suggests some possible additions to reading lists that range from the* Upanishads *and* Koran *to Gabriel Garcia Marquez's* Love in the Time of Cholera.

Since the race and gender viewpoints of the new advocates of multiculturalism and diversity find little support in other cultures, it seems reasonable to expect that these cultures would be roundly denounced as even more backward and retrograde than the West. But, for political reasons, this is totally unacceptable, since the developing world is viewed as suffering the same kind of oppression that blacks, Hispanics, women, and homosexuals suffer in America. It is crucial for the activists to maintain victim solidarity. As a result, instead of being subjected to charges of misogyny and prejudice, non-Western cultures are ransacked to find "representative" figures who are congenial to the Western propaganda agenda—then, like Rigoberta Menchu, they are triumphantly presented as the "repressed voices" of diversity, fit for the solemn admiration and emulation of American undergraduates.... University leaders who are committed to an honest and critical analysis of other cultures should replace ersatz multiculturalism with a better alternative. A serious and authentic multicultural curriculum would satisfy three basic criteria.

First, it would study non-Western ideas and institutions in relation to, and not as a substitute for, the great works of Western thought. Educated citizens should know the philosophical, historical, and literary basics of their own culture. Just as an educated Chinese would be familiar with Confucius, so it is imperative that Americans know something about Thomas Jefferson and the Bible. Indeed students are better equipped to study other cultures when they have critically reflected on their own, because they then have a basic knowledge against which to compare new ideas and new experience; indeed, they are in a position to develop standards of aesthetic and moral judgment that transcend the conven-

tions of any particular culture.

Second, a multicultural curriculum should teach the "best that has been thought and said" in other cultures. It should not be arrogantly assumed that Western thinkers such as Plato and Aristotle should be studied to determine whether their ideas are true or false, while the people of Asia, Africa, and Latin America should be studied just for their social and economic anthropology, and particularly for their victimization at the hands of the West. Non-Western teachers such as Confucius, Mohammed, and Zoroaster advanced controversial theses about human happiness, how society should be organized, and the role of women. And these deserve to be taken seriously, which is to say, subjected to the same critical scrutiny as Socrates and Rousseau.

It defeats the purpose of multicultural education to cater to the political prejudices of Westerners. In fact the greatest advantage of such education is that it performs a similar function as a serious reading of Western classics: it helps to liberate American students of the late twentieth century from the provincialism of the moment. Just as the classic texts of Thucydides, Dante, and Shakespeare draw us backward into time, providing a rare glimpse into the minds and lives of the past, non-Western classics draw us across the boundaries of space, providing us with an experience of the way other people think and live. It is no argument against these texts that they do not always speak directly to the passions of the moment; their benefit is that they provide spiritual, intellectual, and emotional encounters otherwise unavailable to us. And at their finest, they illuminate the enduring questions of life and love and death with which all human beings, past and present, native and foreign, have ever grappled.

While non-Western classics may be taught for their powerful, if controversial and unfashionable, vision of an alternative way of life, a third principle for multicultural curricula should be political and cultural relevance. This does not contradict earlier points—it simply means that Americans should study other civilizations both for what is timeless about them, and for what is timely. By learning about societies that vitally intersect with the West, students can better prepare themselves to deal with the most pressing challenges of a global society.

As the world becomes a smaller place, great political and social currents from different societies are likely to come into increasing contact and collision. Three of these are Asian (especially Japanese) capitalism, which has proved so successful in world markets; the rapid spread of Protestant evangelicalism and democracy throughout traditionally Catholic and autocratic Latin America; and Islamic radicalism and fundamentalism, perhaps the most formidable ideological opponent of Western liberal democracy in the aftermath of the Cold War. Students should consider such questions as why the "age of secularism" has produced such a powerful religious revival in the Arab world; what relationship, if any, Islamic fundamentalism bears to American fundamentalism; how free churches and free elections will change the landscape of Hispanic culture, and indeed of the Americas; and whether the Confucian ethic of East Asia is as advantageous for capitalism as the "Protestant ethic" of Max Weber.

COLUMBUS AND THE QUINCENTENARY

Next year, the nation and hemisphere will commemorate the five-hundredth anniversary of Columbus' landing on San Salvador island in what are today the Bahamas, thus beginning the most astonishing cross-cultural event of the millenium. This Quincentenary is destined to be a controversial affair, reifying much of the multicultural rhetoric of the moment and providing a sample of opinion on the European discovery and conquest of the Western hemisphere. The landing has more than its share of modern-day antagonists. Plans are afoot to blockade harbors when replicas of the Spanish caravels arrive. Some constructive and not-so-constructive thinking on the interpretation of the subject is now underway. A number of educational and religious agencies are preparing position statements and resolutions for 1992.

Last fall, the National Council for the Social Studies, sympathetic to multicultural revision-

ism, convened a panel of historians and curriculum planners to debate the subject. One participant called for "the development of positive models for teaching multicultural values in a pluralistic society in an interdependent world," exhibiting the conventional rhetoric of the field. In observing the Quincentenary, the NCSS is trying to single out a number of key points for educators to bear in mind as it prepares an official statement to be released later this spring. To the good, social studies organizations including the NCSS acknowledge the magnitude of the event in terms of demography, genetic mingling, diet, and what today we'd call geopolitics and geoeconomy.

This emerging position includes the already well-known fact that Columbus did not discover a "new" world. It considers the misfortunes of European expansion into the Western hemisphere, as do most leading textbooks. European diseases to which native Americans were not immune, for example, took a lethal toll. Furthermore, the voyages were not just a "European" phenomenon, since much of the technology that made Columbus' voyages possible—compass, gun powder, sail and stern-rudder systems—came from China. Less convincingly, the NCSS asserts that the America (and Africa) of 1492 was inhabited by peoples with societies as complex and diverse as European cultures.

No one in multicultural precincts seems to regard the European discovery of a heretofore unknown hemisphere—for that matter, the Age of Exploration—as a bold or glorious achievement. Yet the NCSS seems to be steering clear of Manichaean extremism, and its early positions emphatically do not use the Quincentenary as an opportunity for a Europhobic tirade.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for a major Protestant council, which has adopted a resolution taking Columbus' landing to be a truly fiendish prelude to contemporary political ills here and abroad, including racism and inequality. This statement asserts that the traditional view of Christopher Columbus "cosmetically coat[s] the painful aspects of the American history of racism."

The European "invasion" of America, it argues, led directly to slavery and genocide, as well as "ecocide" and economic exploitation. The invasion is the "direct antecedent" of present revolutionary struggles in Central America, it claims. Even Europeans themselves do not get off the hook: "For the descendants of the European conquerors the subsequent legacy has been the perpetuation of paternalism and racism into our cultures and times." With exquisite self-loathing, the resolution blames the church for accompanying and legitimizing the conquest, calling upon organized religion to "repent of its complicity" in this "historical tragedy." In the light of 1492's consequences, the council calls for general "reflection and repentance," advocating what seems to be a sort of national mourning.

It remains hard to believe that such simplistic, historically inaccurate, and depressingly predictable allegations capture the minds of otherwise intelligent people. Is Columbus' landing to be interpreted as a cultural encounter of Europe and a bewildering variety of native American tribes and civilizations? As an invasion with devastating consequences for indigenous tribes and cultures? As a discovery by Europe of a unknown continent that has shaped like nothing else in history global development and human civilization for five hundred years? The correct answer, of course, is all of these.

The story of Columbus and the Europeanization of the Western Hemisphere between the sixteenth and eighteenth century is too compelling, important, and interesting to be reduced to a grim case study of European oppression and imperialism. Millions of people living from Anchorage to Buenos Aires might even argue that European civilization has immeasurably enriched their lives, bringing them modern medicine, sanitation, transportation, communication, and more.

Columbus and the Textbooks

When it comes to the Columbian event, among fastidious multiculturalists, phrases like the "Age of Discovery" and "celebration" are naughty words. Still, the harshest judgments illustrated above are not to be found in major books for elementary and secondary school students.

Many social studies textbooks still have

chapter headings like "Brave Explorers" and "Daring Discoverers." Other titles are more muted, such as "Spanish Arrival in the Americas." In no texts, so far, have words like "ecocide" entered the picture, even though we may expect some strenuous efforts during the next two years among some curriculum planners to obtain compensatory revisions in texts. In fact, some strides in the subjects of Columbus and European exploration have been made. A recent arrival in fifth grade history, D.C. Heath's *Exploring America's Heritage*, is part of a 1991 series. The book outpaces many standard texts used in elementary-level American history, reflecting ongoing improvements in the new generation of elementary social studies texts.

Exploring America's Heritage incorporates new thinking about European expansion and Christopher Columbus' adventures with some finesse. "Europeans...claim that they had found a 'new world.' But people had been living in the Americas for thousands of years. To these people, the *Europeans* were from a new world," it reads. After attention to geography, native American cultures, European expansionism, and the quest for new trade routes to Asia, the book brings Columbus on to the historical stage. He cuts an impressive figure: "With his red hair, blue eyes, and freckled face, the young dreamer was often seen gazing out on the water," says one passage. Later, the book reads: "On Friday, October 12, 1492, at two o'clock in the morning, a sailor suddenly sighted land in the moonlight.... Columbus landed, raised the Spanish flag, and claimed the island for Spain. The scenery was fresh and green. Flocks of brightly colored parrots chattered in the trees."

The book does not shrink from the ill-effects of European colonization. It states bluntly that "many Indian ways of life passed—like the torn feather—from the earth." It commemorates the millions of Indians who died under Spanish rule: "Some Indians died in battles. Others died from being used harshly as slaves. But millions of Indians died from the diseases the Spaniards unknowingly carried to the Americas. Because the diseases were new to the Americas, the Indians could not easily resist them. Typhoid fever, measles, and smallpox were the greatest killers." Thus the book at once explains a historical tragedy and distinguishes it from "genocide."

Two new textbooks with 1991 copyrights are designed for use in American history in eighth grade and high school classes. Like virtually all texts today, Scott, Foresman's *America: The People and the Dream* devotes considerable attention to pre-Columbian cultures and events before coming to Columbus' journeys to the west. Again, Columbus' story receives vivid treatment. "His sailors, fearing starvation, began to grumble. After more than three weeks without sight of land, nerves strained to the breaking point," one passage says. "Some sailors mocked Columbus, while others whispered of a plan to throw him overboard."

Another book, John Garraty's *The Story of America* from Holt, Rinehart, adopted for eighth graders in California, has sufficient depth and rigor to make the book appropriate in eleventh grade courses. With an artful prelude, it moves more quickly than *America: The People and the Dream* to the Age of Discovery and Christopher Columbus. Instead of focusing on Columbus, Garraty—much better than many textbook writers—weaves a a rich tale of the explorers Balboa, Magellan, Pizarro, and Ponce de Leon. Thus the book crafts a full description of the Iberian explorers, shortly joined by the English and French, and even tackles the concept of "invasion."

Many textbook passages on Columbus have genuine literary merit. The same can rarely be said of textbook summaries overall that fail to convey the grand sweep of three centuries between the 1490s and the 1790s, when the European explorers and their colonial descendants on all continents altered the world forever. But an inspection of American history textbooks reveals that the dark side of the European conquest of the Americas is included. On the other hand, and justly, Europe is not portrayed as Darth Vader. Given the consequences of the landing, perhaps the most surprising aspect of the story of Columbus, rich with narrative possibilities, is that history textbooks do not set the episode into higher relief.

NOTED WITH INTEREST

★ In February, the executive board of the Organization of American Historians issued a statement regarding history curricula in public schools. Riven by the continuing debate between those who want concentration on Euro-American history and those who want a non-Western curriculum, the OAH gingerly walked the *via media*. The declaration pays homage to the therapeutic benefits of history ("self-esteem") for certain oppressed groups. It does not make clear that the omission or misrepresentation of women, minorities, and other groups has been largely corrected in recent historiography. It hopes for a history where everyone and everything counts, ideally about the same, which is not the way the world has worked in the past and is not probably how it will work in the future. On balance, however, the statement is a useful effort to advance consensus and establish a solid center in curricular controversies marked by veiled political aims that reject time-honored principles of historical inquiry in order to reconstruct the past and advance "new perspectives." Here are some highlights:

History involves a continuing process of discovery, of reinterpretation, and of varying and often clashing perspectives. Therefore, great care should be taken to assure that the history taught in the public schools, whether that of racial minorities, women, and working people, or that of the whole society, be based upon sound historical scholarship....

The history curricula of public schools should be constructed around the principle that all people have been significant actors in human events....

A primary goal of history education is to foster mutual understanding and respect among people of different backgrounds and traditions.... A history that asserts or implies the inherent superiority of one race, gender, class, or region of the world over another is by definition "bad history" and should have no place in American schools....

Whether the people of the United States regard themselves as one nation or many, or as some combination of both, most Americans will probably recognize that they share certain common traditions, values, and experiences arising out of their common humanity and their interactions with one another. These include our political and economic institutions, however imperfect, a mass culture that affects everyone, and a common entitlement to freedom, equality, and dignity.

★ Educators who desire the expansion of primary materials in history and social studies teaching should be aware of a new anthology entitled *The American Reader*, edited by Diane Ravitch of Columbia University. The compilation is eclectic and elegant, incorporating documents that move beyond political history into popular culture and literature. *The American Reader* includes chestnuts like the Declaration of Independence and the Gettysburg Address. But it reaches out broadly into American folklore, including such items as the "Old Oaken Bucket," the hit song of 1826, and the lyrics to "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean." Henry David Thoreau's essay on civil disobedience appears, as does Horace Mann's case for public education and Angelina Grimké's declamation against slavery. The book includes John Greenleaf Whittier's "Barbara Frietchie" and "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." Twentieth-century selections include the writing of Jacob Riis and W. E. B. Du Bois. Even Tom Hayden's Port Huron Statement and Bob Dylan's "Blowing in the Wind" make the scene. The book is inventively illustrated, with the polished design of a trade book. Published by Harper Collins, this collection is a welcome addition that should appeal to librarians, teachers, and students.

★ The once dominant textbook publisher Harcourt Brace Jovanovich is apparently to be bought by General Cinema, one of the largest movie-theater chains in the nation, for about $1.4 billion. HBJ publishes books for kindergarten through eighth grade and owns Holt, Rinehart and Winston, which publishes texts for junior and senior high schools. Since 1988, the former number-one publisher of instructional materials has slipped to a number-three position after Macmillan/McGraw-Hill and Simon & Schuster. HBJ became heavily indebted in 1987 when it chose to escape an unwanted takeover bid from the British media magnate Robert Maxwell (who later bought Macmillan). It has ever since been considered

the sick man of the textbook industry, and textbooks are more important to HBJ than some other publishing houses. The company was almost certain to default on its debt before 1993, and how to pay off bondholders remains a problem. The vultures have been circling for some time. The merger will give the Massachusetts-based theater chain control of many leading textbooks, trade books, and scientific and professional journals. And with this latest deal, another independent publisher becomes part of an entertainment corporation. Textbooks and other print media are increasingly held captive to diversified communications corporations that seem to provide much for-profit fare that is at the very least competitive with reading and book learning. What this means for instructional materials, general learning, and literacy remains to be seen.

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deserve? The painter Paul Gauguin asked in his Tahiti tryptich: "Where Do We Come From? Who Are We? Where Are We Going?" These remain, Robert Coles reminds us in *The Spiritual Life of Children* (1990), "the eternal questions children ask more intensely, unremittingly, and subtly than we sometimes imagine."

Syracuse University education professor Gerald Grant noted in *The World We Created at Hamilton High* (1988), parents and teachers are confused about values and moral education. Many of them are convinced that morality is a strictly individual matter, hence the popularity of values clarification. Concerning religion, "the case has to be made anew that morality is independent of religion and that religion is neither a necessary nor a sufficient justification for the most basic, universal, ethical principles," Grant asserted.

The Issue of Religion

While this seems valid, the question whether religion is a taproot of vital moral systems cannot be entirely ignored. As George Washington said in his Farewell Address: "Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle."

Surely the *story* of religion—a fundamental influence in shaping the ideas and events of the American nation—has shrunk to nearly nothing in school-level history. For the last thirty years educators have evaded, denied, or underestimated an impelling historical force. By ignoring its importance in human life and letters, they have compounded confusion over values in elementary and secondary schools.

In 1986, a study by New York University professor Paul Vitz first called attention to these curricular evasions. In contemporary life, Vitz said, textbooks exhibit a "deep-seated fear of any form of active contemporary Christianity, especially serious, committed Protestantism," except in picturesque and quaint design, as with the Amish in Pennsylvania. A wide ideological spectrum of prominent education groups have echoed Vitz's complaint.

Last year, Warren A. Nord, Director of the Program in the Humanities and Human Values at the University of North Carolina, wrote in *Social Education*, there is "a growing, now very broad, consensus for incorporating a much greater study of religion into public education. Although there continues to be considerable concern about whether this can be done well in practice, there is widespread—and growing—agreement in principle that religion must be taken seriously."

"Our roots are to be found, Matthew Arnold told us, in the Hellenism of Athens and the Hebraicism of Jerusalem. Of course 'our' roots are now also to be found in the Meccas and Benares of various non-Western religions as we become an increasingly pluralistic society," Nord said. "What cannot be doubted is that our ways of thinking about nature, morality, art, and society were once—and for many people still are—fundamentally religious, and still today in our highly secular world it is difficult even for the non-religious to extricate themselves entirely from the webs of influence and meaning provided by our religious past." Nord concluded: "To understand history and literature one must understand a great deal about religion: on this all agree. Consequently, the relative absence of religion from history textbooks is deeply troubling."

The Wall Street Journal noted this May that "unholy wars have broken out among parents, religious groups and school boards" as educators throughout the country make efforts to bring religion back into the curriculum. It added, "Some critics contend the movement inevitably favors America's predominant faith, Christianity, and worry such teaching might be used to proselytize. Others wonder about which of the world's 3,000 religions will be included." (California's 1987 social studies framework includes five—Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism.) Meanwhile, some parents who have raised their children to believe in one God object to the study of a smorgasbord of deities worshipped around the world.

Extremists of many viewpoints accuse textbooks of satanism or Christian advocacy or violations of Allah's honor. At the same time, what Hilton Kramer has called "moral panic" mounts among many parents and

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VALUES AND TEXTBOOKS

Parents want moral instruction in schools. What kind of instruction is a more controversial matter. As the nation's formal agencies of learning, public schools act as stages where broader cultural conflicts are played out. Here, citizens struggle to define crucial knowledge, public and private virtue, and decent behavior. Institutional clashes over authority, values, and ethical boundaries make school operations difficult, increasingly so. If a culture cannot define or share precepts about how citizens should behave, schools should not be expected to deliver fast answers.

The New Republic has warned of "the prospect of decline that lurks in the erosion of the values" replaced by "the endlessness of personal freedoms." To what degree is moral instruction impeded by the cult of self-determination and what Robert Nisbet has called the "twilight of authority"? By denial of the sacred and the progress of secularism? These are important questions, but they are difficult questions for educators to discuss. Moral education occurs informally, among family and friends, on playgrounds more often than in formal lessons—by imitation, by example, by insight. During the early 1980s some educators looked to "great books" to convey moral ideals, a better vehicle perhaps than "values clarification" curricula, which extol openness, caring, and other easy virtues of our times. But the classics only raise moral issues; they do not by themselves instill moral judgment.

The heart of values only touches on classroom studies. Yet schools cannot avoid curricular and institutional definitions of social justice, individual entitlement, and the good life. The issues are basic: What is allowed? How shall we live? What do we

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others who feel that public schools and other cultural agencies stand for values that are alien to Judeo-Christian teachings or must remain "value-neutral" by law. Moreover, the popularization of psychology, the study of primitive cultures, and the illuminating discoveries of science—all of which advance existential explanations as plausible as those found in the Bible and other sacred texts—have influenced many parents. Orthodox conceptions of creation, eternal life, and salvation have lost their power to capture the imagination of many ordinary citizens.

In *Engel v. Vitale* (1962) the Supreme Court struck down a state-sponsored program of interdenominational prayer in the New York public schools. Government "should stay out of the business of writing or sanctioning official prayers and leave that purely religious function to the people themselves and to those the people choose to look to for religious guidance," stated Justice Hugo Black in the majority opinion. In the singular dissent, Justice Potter Stewart retorted that the state of New York did nothing except "to recognize and to follow the deeply entrenched and highly cherished spiritual traditions of our Nation."

(Twenty-nine years later, it is hard for most worldly Americans to accept the idea that the state might actually have written prayers for children to recite in schools. Even many devout Christians would doubt such educational activity, indicating the progress of secularism in all quarters of American society during the last generation or two.)

Educators interpreted *Engel v. Vitale* to mean they should avoid mentioning religion even in academic ways. Many teachers today believe they are prevented by law from talking about morals or virtue, which they take to be religious teaching. Textbook publishers, concerned by controversies and lost revenues, made matters worse by moving religion outside the humanities.

But the struggle for religious liberty—indeed liberation from established orthodoxies—strikes the dominant chord in American history textbooks. Once this point is made, customarily with the earliest settlements and the Bill of Rights, the texts move on. What is not well explained is the time-honored place of religion in moral and civic life and how Judeo-Christian belief has entered into the national calculus. Some newer world histories have made an effort to correct these omissions so as to advance multiculturalism. Yet what religion is—and the passions it invokes—remain cryptic. Why?

Public schools face a battery of conflicting moral beliefs. They operate under constitutional restraints that render all student views and most student behavior permissible, even if disagreeable. "Caring" educators have shuddered ritually at the idea of adult dictation of moral standards to the young. Their habitual relativism is like a tic. The origins of this view go back at least to *Summerhill* (1960), a book by the eccentric English progressive, A. S. Neill. *Summerhill* professed that since every child had unique creative impulses to be nurtured, children should be free from imperatives of normative information, imposed behavior, and enforced devotion to received morality. Neill held with grim self-righteousness that for a child to accept a "ready-made code of morals is dangerous." For Neill, "the first thing a child should learn is to be a rebel."

Since the 1960s, many forward-looking clergy in prominent churches, synagogues, and dioceses have seemed embarrassed or bored by Mosaic law and Scripture. Honest folk who cling to honorable values of sobriety, hard work, thrift, and reverence understand that values that have colonized fashionable opinion and thought since the 1960s are hostile to—and mocking of—the very things they cherish most.

"Traditional values generally have been seen to revolve around commitments to the larger community—to the family, to parental responsibility, to country, to the work ethic, to sexual restraint, to self-control, to rules, duty, authority, and a stable social order," Thomas Byrne Edsall with Mary D. Edsall wrote recently in *The Atlantic Monthly*. "The competing set of insurgent values, the focus of rights-oriented political ideologies, of the rights revolution, and of the civil-rights movement, has been largely concerned with the rights of the individual—with freedom from oppression, from confinement, from hierarchy, from authority, from stricture,

from repression, from rigid rule-making, and from the status quo."

Prevailing sensitivity toward religion in schools intimidates every self-protective teacher or administrator who loathes the prospect of being caught in a hysterical legal controversy. The issue inexorably lands—not very civilly—in the nation's courts. If judicial remedies seem awkward or draconian, they nonetheless have considerable influence on the tenor of the classroom by signal and subtext.

The majority decision in *Stone v. Graham* (1980) reflects secular reasoning regarding the posted presence of the Ten Commandments by law in Kentucky classrooms. The case is memorable since the Decalogue is the set of ethical principles derived from Mosaic law in the thirteenth century B.C. and was the epitome of legal and priestly traditions in Judaic culture by the eighth century B.C. It describes the basic conditions for a community in relation with God. For most Americans, the Decalogue seems fundamental to the moral tradition of three millenia, a tradition that the Court ruled out of modern bounds:

A VIEW FROM WASHINGTON

In 1989, the U.S. Department of Education summarized the proceedings of a conference entitled "Moral Education and Character" that considered these controversial subjects and even wondered whether there was a federal role in the area. Some highlights of the summary follow:

Inevitably, moral education is part of the normal school day. Students and teachers trust one another to prepare for and attend class so that they can learn together. The school requires obedience to the rules so that activities can be conducted. A teacher breaks up a fight on the playground, and later tells his class about when he was a child and saw his father stop a fight, and how he felt proud of his father's action.

Since the founding of our republic, people have debated about how children should be taught moral values, who should teach them, and what values should be taught.... Moral education concerns learning about good conduct. It is about the development of character, the stable qualities of a person that are revealed in his or her actions.

Frequently, people adopt a simplistic view of morality. They think it only concerns lying, sexual misbehavior, and cheating. But one conferee suggested that moral judgments are manifest in almost every action we take. Such judgments are expressed in what he termed the "voices of conscience"....

It is a mark of character whether the individual takes care to perform such everyday actions well. If we present morality or ethics to children in ways that include this sort of performance, then moral education and conduct become a constant concern, not one restricted to occasional momentous decisions.... Neither the public schools, the Federal government, nor the social majority is entitled to impose a specific view of morality on children of dissenting parents.

Certain features of morality are so taken for granted that people tend to focus on the controversial aspects, such as the role religion should or should not play in moral education, and overlook what everyone accepts....

Many religions are practiced in the United States, and opinions about the proper role of religion in moral education are as diverse as they are complex. While participants acknowledged that public and private schools face different kinds of issues, they generally agreed that religious convictions have a bearing on moral convictions, and thus are a natural part of discussions about moral education. The conferees noted that controversy over religion could easily become a source of concern, but they also realized that ignoring religion makes no sense.

In their discussions, panelists identified a number of ways in which religion might legitimately appear in public schools, since the Supreme Court has made a Constitutional distinction between teaching religion and teaching about religion. Teaching about religion is Constitutional, but in practice it may be difficult to do one and not the other.

Held: ...posting the Ten Commandments, which do not confine themselves to arguably secular matters, is plainly religious in nature, and the posting serves no constitutional educational function.... This is not a case in which the Ten Commandments are integrated into the school curriculum, where the Bible may constitutionally be used in an appropriate study of history, civilization, ethics, comparative religion, or the like.... If the posted copies of the Ten Commandments are to have any effect at all, it will be to induce the schoolchildren to read, meditate upon, perhaps to venerate and obey, the Commandments. However desirable this might be as a matter of private devotion, it is not a permissible state objective.

While fair-minded scholars may appreciate this logic, even if they disagree with it, to the faithful, that is, to millions of Americans, such judicial wisdom may be myopic. *Stone v. Graham* presents a breathtaking departure from the past. Even though it includes an affirmative view of teaching about religion, it suggests to students and teachers that no moral code is absolute or sacred.

Today the United States still overwhelmingly conforms to religious sentiment and sacred will, and in many different varieties, mainly but not just Judeo-Christian. Presidents are sworn in with their hands on the Bible. The state supports chaplains in the armed forces. Churches, temples, and mosques exist in a privileged fiscal position, virtually exempt from taxes and government rule.

The nature of the supermundane may be argued, and the ineffable wonder of aboriginal man may be missing from daily life in contemporary New York or Los Angeles. But from religion spring provisional explanations for design in nature and for a cosmos endowed with creative energy. As University of Virginia sociologist James Davison Hunter notes, religion has long provided "a stable set of moral coordinates to guide everyday life, as well as mechanisms to help the individual cope with the traumatic experiences of suffering, pain, and death." Thus the study of religions and their existential answers is too important to excise from the curriculum and textbooks.

What About Instructional Materials?

Any sensible person knows that textbooks cannot in themselves teach values or morality. "All forms of moral education which relegate it to techniques that can be taught in a few classes a week are suspect, particularly if a program like values clarification is seen as an activity in which adults engage only as facilitators," Gerald Grant has warned.

Quite likely, educators looking for instructional materials will encounter guides similar to those such as *How to Plan a Program for Moral Education* (1990), issued by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. It is not hard to gather some idea of moral education's typical contours and conventions from this widely distributed 45-page booklet.

The ASCD view is pedestrian and well meaning, and as is usual in such lessons, pragmatic in its motives. "We surely don't want young people running around in destructive groups. We don't want them into drugs, alcohol, or crime. We don't want them teasing others, speaking disrespectfully, withdrawing from their families, or cheating on their schoolwork," the guide asserts. "Healthy, balanced humans, no matter what the culture, seem to experience more inner satisfaction than when they lie, reject others, or do sloppy work."

The problem is that this guide and others like it have great trouble defining boundaries of normative behavior. The text is full of soft-focus jargon. It aims to create students who "practice living intelligently, self-responsibly, and with integrity," but it never comes within an inch of explaining what all this means or how it is to be achieved. Its prescriptive conclusion calls for "activities" that enhance self-esteem, exercise thinking skills, teach communication, and build healthful, collaborative learning climates.

The booklet cites a 1988 ASCD commission definition of a "morally mature person" as one who:

> —respects human dignity—as by avoiding manipulating others and standing up for the underdog
> —cares for the welfare of others—as by enjoying helping people and working to

correct social injustices
—integrates individual interests and social responsibilities—as by participating in community projects and fulfilling personal promises
—demonstrates integrity—as by admitting errors and avoiding situations that prevent one from living true to one's own self
—reflects on moral choices—as by distinguishing what can be done from what should be done and seeking the ideas of others
—seeks peaceful resolution of conflicts—as by promoting communication in conflict situations and learning healthful ways to handle anger.

Such a statement is thin gruel indeed. Textually, it leaves vast questions unanswered, including issues of self-control and public order. A semiotician could have a field day. What do we mean by "underdog" and "correct social injustices"? And the question must be asked, not facetiously, have the authors of this coda ever heard of Polonius? This non-rhetorical question does not lead into a case for using "great books" to teach morality. They don't. But the old courtier's advice to his son, Laertes, and many other passages from classic and contemporary literature at least raise and address questions of value.

Most social studies books, even civics texts, avoid the subject of values entirely. Or more precisely, they approach values purely from the standpoint of individual rights and self-determination. Sometimes texts curtsy to duty, for example, stressing the voting process and the need for public "decision-making." The conventional message in American history texts is suggested in the fifth grade American history, *The United States and the Other Americas* (Macmillan, 1985), which declares that "the equal rights movement . . . will continue until all people in the United States enjoy full equal rights" and that "we must choose what kind of world we want, and work for it."

A large cohort of students satisfy social studies requirements by taking health, consumer, home economics, and life adjustment courses. *Growing Up Caring*, reviewed by Harriet Tyson in this issue, is a representative book of this genre. In such books, words like *good* and *evil*, *character* and *envy* fail to appear. Instead, these "practical" texts dispense advice on dating, grooming, avoiding drugs, AIDS prevention, and how to "get along" in the world. They never suggest that originating sources of conduct or moral authority may reside outside the individual and "personal best."

To find an explicitly prescriptive and hard-edged treatment of ethics, we can turn to science. Perhaps because scientific inquiry is considered more reliable than esthetics or political philosophy, such books are bolder than basic social studies texts. Environmental education is one of the major growth areas of the high school curriculum, often appearing as an elective that can satisfy either a social studies or science requirement.

Accordingly, Addison Wesley has developed a new text called *Environmental Science: A Framework for Decision Making* (1989). It introduces an unequivocal and aggressive value system into its lessons on "environmental ethics." "The central theme of this book is that the time for action is running short: overpopulation, resource depletion, pollution, neglect, and indifference are rapidly catching up with us," its preface reads. The alarmist tone of this book seems coupled to the proposition that international capitalism—the singular mechanism of global economic activity today—is bad for you.

The sections in *Environmental Science* on hard science are perfectly adequate, say, when the book explains how carbon dioxide is created or how water ecologies operate. More debatable is its coverage of overpopulation, malnutrition, imperiled wildlife, fouled water, non-renewable resources, toxic substances, and hazardous wastes, which at the very least gives a controversial view of the human condition. Here is a sample passage:

> The ecological crisis is the sum of the interconnected problems of population, depletion, and pollution. However, a crisis of the human spirit is also evident. As many psychologists point out, it is easy for people to escape into materialistic life-styles. With equal ease, many among us view ourselves as apart from nature and immune to its laws. Technological advancement and

economic growth, which have brought great prosperity and improved living conditions, have become the primary goals of society. Little thought is given to future generations and the long-term health and well-being of the planet.

According to *Environmental Science*, the industrial world operates with a "frontier ethic," a "human-centered" view that sees the world's resources as unlimited and nature as something to overcome. The book asserts that "traditional Western teachings"—nature exists to serve humans—are at fault. This humanism and "biological imperialism" are the core sources of environmental damage and other public evils. "We use the world to feed the self. We exploit the water, air, wildlife, minerals, timber, and soils to serve the ego," *Environmental Science* intones. After shaming the reader, it declares the need for a different and more enlightened outlook. The book seems inert to the huge changes in con-sumer outlook (at least among middle-class and affluent people in the advanced industrial nations) that a twenty-year environmental movement has wrought.

Environmental Science calls for "sustainable ethics" of a communal kind that revolve around the understanding of limited supplies of resources, recycling, cooperation with nature, and human restraint. It seeks nothing less than human renewal, apparently grounded in anti-acquisitive and pantheistic premises. In such a world, "We will no longer yearn for more or seek to continue our current levels of consumption."

The book hints at the self-destructive inclinations of the human race, at least in its present state of nationalistic mind. The text segues from "sustainable ethics" into the issue of nuclear weapons and nuclear warfare, detailing the blast effect of explosions and effects of radiation exposure with gruesome detail and "scientific" dispassion. Thence it calls for a "new global economic system" that includes as goals population reduction (happily, "through attrition"), the reduction of arms sales, global cooperation, and, of course, "a new ethical system based on sustainable ethics." Such views extend well beyond social studies and ethics. They seem much closer to a system of indoctrination.

FEELING GOOD ABOUT YOURSELF

Growing Up Caring. Glencoe/McGraw-Hill, 1990.

By Harriet Tyson

In March 1990, a star-studded press briefing in New York introduced *Growing Up Caring* as the "first values-based textbook for adolescents" and the only program of its kind on the market. While this claim is open to debate, given the plethora of life adjustment texts in low-end social studies and health courses, *Growing Up Caring* puts in high relief an ethical and behavioral model of everyday values.

The briefing featured Eunice Kennedy Shriver, vice-president of the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr., Foundation, and highlighted the publisher's reliance on the Foundation's school program, "Community of Caring," as the basis for the book. The publisher asserts success-by-association with the "Community of Caring" program, which has "demonstrated significantly more knowledge and less inclination toward high-risk behaviors—drug addiction, alcohol abuse, and adolescent sexual activity, among others" in twenty-five schools throughout the country.

Growing Up Caring will appeal to middle-class school personnel who believe that the book might straighten out some trouble-prone adolescents—probably poor and minority—in junior and senior high schools. It aims to present lessons to quell the concern of adults who confront student troubles and misbehavior that walk into school each morning. "Caring" is the book's recurring motif—caring about *yourself*—a pre-condition for caring about others—caring about family and friends, about health, nutrition, environment, and the community. "Values," which are connected to "caring" and "self-worth," are mentioned frequently but defined in vague ways.

Yes, there are "good" and "bad" values, and the book takes an affirmative stand on values of trust, responsibility, caring, respect, and family. Ultimately, though, students are advised to decide what their own values should be. Numerous exercises in "decision-making"

on a variety of issues are supposed to help students invent or reinvent themselves, apparently without reference to anything beyond the teenager's immediate street and world. Students are asked to wrestle with a compendium of the small and large traumas common to American adolescents in the late twentieth century: whether to buy a sweater or save money, whether to live with Mom or Dad after a divorce, whether to break up a romance with a girl who demands too much of your time, whether to say "no" to drugs or sex, whether to stay in or drop out of school.

Too often, the book's analysis of the pros and cons of such decisions amounts to a fine calculation of self-interest. (For example: If I move in with Dad, Mom will be angry and I won't have as much money, but I'll have time for myself, eat out more, and be able to use Dad's VCR. If I stay with Mom, Dad will be angry and I'll have to help out around the house, but Mom is a better cook and I can have my own room and stay with the dog.)

Growing Up Caring conflates two meanings of *value*, one of which means a desired ideal. The "values" that emerge in these exercises are said to promote "self-worth"—if the values are good ones. But wait! The section on self-worth says you are absolutely wonderful and unique just by being you: "The wonderful thing about your worth is that you are born with it. You don't have to work for it. You can't buy it. And because of your unique spiritual nature, you are able to reflect on your own value as a person. You can ask what it means to be you and why that is so important. You have self-worth, or feel good about yourself, when you recognize the value that you have as a person."

Throughout the book, the text seems to alternate between an endorsement of traditional values and the "I'm OK, You're OK" ethos of the 1970s human potential movement. Even when championing traditional values, the authors rarely mention the sources of those values such as myths, religion, philosophy, history, and literature. The Founding Fathers receive a paragraph in the first chapter. Tocqueville gets a paragraph in the last chapter, probably causing him to spin in his grave, since the book celebrates the kind of radical individualism that he saw as the greatest threat to American society.

Religion—as a source of values, or as a reminder that personal and utilitarian concerns are not the whole of life—gets even shorter shrift. The book defines "spirituality" as "the part of yourself that allows you to know you are alive and to feel the wonder of being alive." While sympathizing with Glencoe/McGraw-Hill's fear of interdenominational warfare around a textbook adoption, it is nevertheless impossible to fathom why "spirituality" need be defined solely in terms of the self, and then in psychobabble.

Growing Up Caring carries much sane utilitarian advice about a narrow range of human experience. In the hands of a teacher with abundant self-knowledge, a deep understanding of young people, and some perspective on the American culture, perhaps the book could help young people sail around some of the rocky shoals of adolescence. But it is easy to be skeptical of such instructional materials.

Like the schools and the media, textbook publishers are in the habit of going with, not against, the grain of the culture, even if those currents are ruinous. *Growing Up Caring* proclaims that "To each his own" and "Do your own thing" are American values, in contrast to Japan, where "people learn to serve society first, not themselves." Yet it would appear that many of the perils of adolescence in America are related to the burden of inventing the self from scratch, and the consequent hubris of the self-made man who worships his maker.

Tocqueville observed that when people no longer rely on tradition or authority—both of which are virtually ignored in this book—they look to peers to confirm their judgments. As Americans have banished those traditional sources of personal strength and independence from the public discourse, we have driven our teenagers into the arms of the peer group. The techniques and formulas proposed in the book to help teenagers resist peer pressures seem weak compared to the force of the values vacuum our culture has presented to them in the name of freedom. Thus, the message of this book, albeit tempered by admonitions to care about your family, friends, and commu-

nity, seems to support the very trend toward separateness, self-centeredness, and vulnerability to peer pressure that it purports to counter.

It is doubtful that many students will ever be asked to read Shriver's introduction, probably the best part of the book. She dares to use words like "soul" and "God" in her essay. Shriver offers examples of love from history, literature, poetry, and the sacred books of all religions. She considers sacrifice, a concept that much of the therapeutic community believes to be neurotic. She talks about the horrifying suffering of millions in the rest of the world and its meaning for humane Americans. She mentions the dark side of human nature. If Shriver had written the textbook, *Growing Up Caring* might have been truly "the first values-based textbook for adolescents."

Harriet Tyson has written widely on textbooks and values.

***The Spiritual Life of Children*. By Robert Coles. Houghton Mifflin, 1990.**

For decades, the eminent pediatrician and psychiatrist Robert Coles has allowed children to speak for themselves in describing their world and condition. Part of a celebrated series of books stretching over three decades, *The Spiritual Life of Children* is an oral record painstakingly compiled from interviews with children of various religious backgrounds. Coles follows children into Sunday schools and hospital rooms, listening to their efforts to make sense of the human experience. Surprising for a scholarly trade book, yet indicative of broad interest in the subject, *The Spiritual Life of Children* appeared on *The New York Times* best-seller list earlier this year.

Coles begins his inquiry, taking Freud to task for dismissing religion in *The Future of an Illusion* (1927) as "fairy tales" fed by neurosis. He deplores the "gratuitous reductionism we have seen relentlessly pursued these days in the name of psychoanalysis." For Coles, the metaphysical world is an unprovable actuality: all humans have spiritual lives, and from this book, it is evident that children deal with eternal questions early, and sometimes, with great sophistication. Coles declares that his approach is "contextual," not "scientific," based on observation and careful listening.

Coles' subjects span the age from about nine to early adolescence, that is, the years when children are able to grasp and become interested in things beyond themselves. Many musings in *The Spiritual Life of Children* are haunting and familiar. They range from fundamentalist to agnostic. Coles quotes ten-year-old Alice, whom he calls a secular soul searcher. Alice declaims, perhaps speaking for many Americans:

"I might be saying the wrong thing. I remember—it was last year—I saw the people next door coming home from church, and I looked out the window after they'd left and I tried to ask God if they were right and we were wrong, because we never go. But how can you talk with God? He doesn't talk to us! Daddy says some people hear His voice, but they are hearing things! That's what he thinks. I tried to be serious, though. I said, 'All right, God, please, I'm young, and I'd like to know, so give us a signal, me and my mommy and daddy.' I knew He wouldn't—and He didn't. Later, when I went to the park, I thought there might not be a God, but somehow we have this park and the flowers are out, and how did all of this begin, that's what I'd like to know!"

Coles reminds his readers of whatever faith, or of no faith at all, that they should take the issues that religion raises seriously because children take them seriously. Some will be frustrated by Coles' disinclination to draw broad theories, principles, or conclusions from his interviews. If there is any fault with the book, it is that after a point the transcriptions begin to pale in interest. The reader may ask: so what does this all mean? The absence of authorial commentary will leave some readers uneasy, wondering why Coles fails to provide more guidance to a perplexing and fascinating subject.

TEXTBOOKS AND THE WORLD AROUND US

What an "international perspective" to education means is unclear. An elastic term, it is different things to those who do agree that global and multicultural study belongs closer to the center of the curriculum. An international or global approach: What is it? Is it to be historically and geographically based? Is it to affirm democratic values? Who will produce the needed textbooks?

However these questions are answered, young Americans must understand the political and economic universe that surrounds them. The rise and fall of the Chinese democratic movement, increasing Japanese and German economic power, ongoing turmoil in Latin America and South Africa, events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, and the 1991 war with Iraq are bringing to an end the geopolitical arrangements of the recent past. How the United States plans to respond educationally to these global changes remains to be seen.

A dominant strain of international education incarnates concepts evolving from post-World War II concerns: for the reconstruction of human relations and political institutions, for national planning, for planetary consensus. Franklin D. Roosevelt's Four Freedoms—of speech, of worship, from want, and from fear—and the 1945 United Nations Charter capture this liberal and durable democratic spirit, an optimistic view of the future emphasizing human reason, interdependence, rights, and liberties. For about fifty years, a wide range of community and religious organizations have encouraged the infusion of humanitarian beliefs idealizing peace and harmony in school curricula. Instructional materials and textbooks have long championed global cooperation and cautioned against the perils of unbridled nationalism.

Partisan suppositions sometimes impinge on subject matter. In 1986, for example, Carlos E. Cortes and Dan B. Fleming began an essay about instructional materials in *Social Education*, a publication of the National Council for the Social Studies: "World peace is becoming increasingly fragile as pressures of population growth and an imbalanced distribution of resources, the greater sophistication and spread of military technology, and the presence of nationalism converge to make even the most remote corner of the earth a potential tinderbox for igniting nuclear conflagration." The remedy, they asserted, is instructional materials that eschew "nationalism" and "ethnocentrism." While Cortes and Fleming based their observations on dated sources and statements (e.g., a 1966 report declaring that "nationalistic bias is as persistent in today's schoolbooks as in those used a generation ago"), their point of view represents a prominent strain of thinking among advocates of global studies and international education.

One 1989 curriculum model and resource package developed by a southeastern state defines global perspective as "an attitude—a value position—a recognition of commonalities as well as diversities." This state curriculum guide calls for "perspective consciousness," which diminishes "conflicts of opinion," concluding that: "Dredging the deeper, underlying layers—the orienting beliefs, assumptions and explanations of time, space and causality, all largely unconscious and unquestioned—is more significant." The guide's introduction calls for "state of the planet" awareness, that is, the environmental interdependence of humankind. It also advocates "cross-cultural" awareness, "developing new methods, building on empathy" and also the art of "transpection," a word yet to enter standard dictionaries, the "capacity to imagine oneself in another role within the context of one's own culture."

Such vagueness does not augur a crisply constructed or teacher-legible social studies curriculum. Nor does it suggest any authentic interdisciplinary venture that incorporates geography, world history, economics, civics, and foreign language. Multiculturalism aside, international education may suffer in the 1990s from at least two impediments to a reasoned understanding of the world—utopianism and underestimation of the national record.

Utopianism

One current in global studies and international education, possessed of cosmic ambitions, divorces itself from economic reality. Its origins lie in understandable fears more than twenty years old, fed by the tragic 1968 oil spill off the California coast and such best-selling books as Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962). A Malthusian nightmare, forecast by reports and leading economists during the 1973–74 recession and oil shortage, suggested the end of industrial civilization and a coming era of mass starvation. Authoritative studies announced the advent of global want and environmental catastrophe. For some educators, the perceived horrors of the future made simple policy analysis irrelevant. The concerns of the moment induced a utopian cast of mind, the first priority of which was to introduce a cooperative, transnational, alternative vision of the planetary future.

In *Schooling for a Global Age* (1979), part of the influential Goodlad study of schools, professors Lee and Charlotte Anderson articulated a philosophy of education for world citizenship and outlined a scenario for "world-centered schools." According to the Andersons, the ideal school would act "to develop within students the competencies required to live intelligently and responsibly as individuals, human beings, earthlings, and members of a global society."

While the Andersons made much of students as inhabitants of planet Earth, they made no mention of the polity or constitutional framework under which students actually lived, or of the sources of their affluence, leisure, and tranquility. A new age had evolved through universal thinking consonant with the Andersons' hopes, one that somehow ended the troubling realities of contentious nation-states and material scarcity.

In the Andersons' imagined Terra School of the future, a "learning manager"—teachers have evidently been relegated to an oppressive and authoritarian past—explains that the curriculum tries to show "how we humans depend on the planet's natural resources for gratifying all our needs. These include psychological needs such as our need for affection, beauty, self-actualization, and learning, as well as biological needs for food, water, air, and protection." In the lessons outlined for this idealized elementary school, nine-year-olds are working on a project. They are sending a set of thank-you cards to the rain forests in Brazil, expressing appreciation for the oxygen the forests have contributed to the air.

Pretentiousness aside, this is all very nice. But one does not imagine a fast-track Japanese student, or for that matter, any Brazilian child doing the same thing in school. Conceptually, these lessons seem spongy and self-indulgent, a Mr. Softee of curricula, objectionable not because they are wrong but because they are facile and easy. Arduous lessons in etymology or Spanish grammar, in the river and mountain systems of Asia, or the development of English constitutional liberties are avoided, even as teacher and student may be led to believe that they are delving into subject matter more profound than that which ordinary geography and history lessons can provide.

Underestimation of the National Record

A second current in international education remains neutral or hostile toward democratic capitalism. It is highly critical of the American and European past and reflexively antimilitaristic. Such curricula urge "sensitivity" to how U.S. culture is viewed by other nationalities, especially our country's adversaries. While peace and global harmony enter the conceptual picture, the theme usually takes a pessimistic view of American institutions in history and current affairs. In teaching about foreign policy, the U.S. failure in Vietnam and the need to avoid nuclear incineration are two basic curricular motifs.

Global disharmony, according to this approach, derives mainly from U.S. nationalism, expansionism, and imperialism. But this view ignores American exportations of human rights, improvements in public health, and material prosperity to many non-Western nations. It seems blind toward the pleasures of life in affluent societies, where even the relatively poor own automobiles, refrigerators, and television sets. It overlooks the animus felt in the Third World toward the U.S. that derives simply from envy and resentment. It

forgets that the liberties and individual opportunities that democratic capitalism nourishes account for the continuing influx of foreign capital and press of millions of would-be immigrants into the United States, not to mention popular democratic fronts from Beijing to Tirana.

Lessons that go far to stress America's misdemeanors fail to acknowledge that in much of the world the idea of human rights remains just an idea. In many non-democratic regimes, speaking unpopular or imprudent thoughts can lead to being tortured or having a price put on one's head. In the 1989 Panamanian election, many Americans witnessed the spectacle on television of the opposition's vice-presidential candidate being savagely beaten, as one of General Noreiga's thuggish soldier-policemen stood idly by. Are such events to be viewed by American children as colorful quirks of local custom? Or, taking democratic privileges for granted, will young people just not care?

Fundamental distinctions between the United States and the Soviet Union may attenuate, if optimists prove correct. But civic indifference toward democratic values repudiates the condition on which government derives from the people. If citizen-based governance is no better, nor more successful, than non-democratic regimes, no reasonable basis exists to defend liberty and individual opportunity. Any moral equivalence reflects an exhausted, defeatist strain in democracy, inert to and ungrateful for public protections and benefits, including freedom of speech, privacy, and due process sought by citizens in other parts of the world.

It is likely that in advancing international education, the nation's leaders, the majority of parents, and teachers themselves envision a curriculum dedicated to basic subjects that give all students of all backgrounds a better idea of their place in the world—and the skills they need to operate successsfully within it. Properly constructed, international education would hinge on an authentic interdisciplinary approach building on geography, world history, economics, civics, and languages.

Debates over the nature of international education remain part of a broader controversy inside the social studies and across the curriculum. Americans cannot seem to decide whether curricula should emphasize dissent and government error or celebrate national power and achievement, whether coursework should center on Western civilization or stress other cultures, and whether lessons should be historical or non-historical in design. Resolution of such differences goes far beyond the scope of international education.

In acting to increase student familiarity with the rest of the world and promote productive global learning, educators might consider four precepts:

(1) *Textbooks should explain in vivid ways why the world and its many cultures are important to all American students.*

Textbooks today comprise something very close to a national curriculum. What is included and excluded in such books does much to determine what is taught in classrooms across the country. As is well documented, lack of student interest in social studies derives partly from textbooks that fail to convey the drama and epic story of the global past and many-splendored cultures. Before international education can move beyond wishful thinking, texts in social studies and other courses need to provide lessons that are genuinely stimulating.

(2) *Textbooks should make history and geography organizing subjects.*

Social studies curricula need to strengthen the fundamental scaffolding of history and geography, acting as basic academic subjects on which international education can build. It is geography that explains where we are, and where others are, on Spaceship Earth. It is history that explains how the present came to be. Of our own nation, University of Massachusetts historian Paul Gagnon has said: "American history and ideas, and the vision and fate of democracy on earth, are not intelligible without a prior grasp of the life and ideas of Greece and Rome, Judaism and Christianity, Islam and Christendom in the Middle Ages, feudalism, the Renaissance and Reformation, absolutism, the English Revolution, the French Revolution, and the comparative experiences of Europe and the United States in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries."

(3) *Textbooks should consider the comparative evolution of political institutions and liberties.*

Lessons should include the emergence of ideas that underlie citizen-based governance, market economics, political toleration, and cultural pluralism notably in the West and since 1500. Such political values demand frank comparison with regimes that operate under different standards, including totalitarian rule and assorted forms of zealotry. International education should not minimize the violent conflicts of human history, still with us, including the desire for unlimited power, religious purity, and racial domination. In presenting remedies for global conflict, coursework should not shrink from candid descriptions and evaluations of such modern aggressors as Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Idi Amin, Pol Pot, Ayatollah Khomeini, Saddam Hussein—and the political systems that allow them to gain power.

(4) *Textbooks should avoid subject bias that by design or accident frightens children.*

To students and reflective people of all nations and ages, it should be clear that nuclear conflict and ecological overload present the two macro-issues of the millennium. The response of social studies educators should not be apocalyptic. These complex issues are probably best treated by broad student understanding of science and economics, not in classes where traditional social studies are replaced or excluded. Social studies do students no service when they are grounded in fear and alarmism. Nuclear weapons are hard for thirteen-year-olds to understand. In many textbooks and lessons complicated subjects are simplified to the point of misrepresentation. One leading sixth grade text describes acid rain by saying: "Imagine how houseplants would react if they were sprinkled with vinegar!" If the bombs don't get you, the ozone layer and poisoned water will. Not to make light of grave concerns, the view of some "peace" and "environmental" studies is nonetheless deterministic and overly bleak. It gives a despairing view of the future. Its unintended message to children may be nihilistic, provoking an unhealthy but natural response on their part to the hopeless condition into which they were born. No responsible educator wants to send such a signal, just as no responsible educator—however committed to global thinking—should believe that for humankind a magic, effortless, harmonious future is probable in the near future, hastened by facile course content.

THE MULTICULTURE WATCH: A Statement from Albany

On June 20, the New York state education department released its long-awaited report on multiculturalism and the social studies curriculum. Multiculturalism has emerged as a central debate in the curriculum, not only in New York but across the country. Minority groups have increasingly demanded that social studies courses include more information about their cultural antecedents and contributions. The significance of the debate is hard to overestimate. As *The New York Times* recently said, "the battle over the New York state social studies curriculum is fundamentally a battle over the idea of America. Is the United States a land where immigrants and minorities mute their separate histories and traditions and adopt a common, if amorphous, culture? Or, is it a land where ethnicity should be celebrated over and above any shared heritage?"

Readers of the *Review* will remember that New York helped to ignite the multicultural controversy in 1989 when a task force report called "A Curriculum of Inclusion" gained instant notoriety, as it asserted that the New York social studies curriculum encouraged "white nationalism" and ethnocentrism. Beset by widespread criticism, education commissioner Thomas Sobol empaneled a committee to review these charges and make recommendations for curriculum development.

The new 97-page document, entitled "One Nation, Many Peoples: A Declaration of Cultural Interdependence," offers no great surprises. The committee deck was stacked with multicultural enthusiasts. The new report is essentially an imprimatur of the old, albeit with more moderate language and tone. Says its preamble, "The principle of respect for diverse cultures is critical to our nation,

and we affirm that a right to cultural diversity exists. We believe that the schoolroom is one of the places where this cultural interdependence must be reflected."

The report's content is familiar and vague. For example, it takes as a unifying principle that "multicultural perspectives should infuse the curriculum." Some of its propositions are both trendy and a little scary: "The subject matter content should be treated as socially constructed and therefore tentative—as is all knowledge." Urging that history not be taught from a Western perspective but "globally," the report notes that people called minorities in America should be referred to as "part of the world's majorities." Overall, this guide to multiculturalism is full of platitudes and vacuous declarations. It advocates curricular reforms already widely accepted and does little to advance understanding of a complicated subject.

Some members of the committee issued individual statements that indicate they would have liked the document to have taken a more explicitly anti-Western perspective. Diane Glover, a New York City teacher, said, "The educational community needs to know...the role of European scholarship in promoting psychological and historical inferiority. They need to know or to try to understand how racism has impacted on children of African descent and its relationship to self-concept, economic, and sociological variables." Wrote Ali A. Mazrui, a professor of humanities at State University of New York at Binghamton: "American children need to know that genocide was part of the birth of *this* nation. The holocaust began at home."

The report drew cogent criticism from three dissenting members of the committee. While noting that they did not disagree with many of the report's suggestions, they felt that it was, in the words of historian Kenneth Jackson of Columbia University, "politically and intellectually unwise for us to attack the traditions, customs, and values which attracted immigrants to these shores in the first place." Said Jackson: "The people of the United States will recognize, even if this committee does not, that every viable nation has to have a common culture to survive in peace."

Historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., concurred: "The underlying philosophy of this report, as I read it, is that ethnicity is the defining experience for most Americans, that ethnic ties are permanent and indelible, that the division into ethnic groups establishes the basic structure of American society and that a main objective of public education should be the protection, strengthening, celebration, and perpetuation of ethnic origins and identities.... The bonds of national cohesion in the republic are sufficiently fragile already. Public education should aim to strengthen those bonds, not weaken them," Schlesinger said.

"Our democratic ideals have been imperfectly realized but the long labor to achieve them and to move the American experiment from exclusion to participation has been a central theme of American history. It should be a central theme of the New York social studies curriculum. And it is important for students to understand where these democratic ideals come from.... Nothing is said about the influence of European ideas of democracy, human rights, self-government, rule of law."

Harvard education professor Nathan Glazer added: "A conception of American multiculturalism that is true to its complex reality does not lend itself easily to teaching children and adolescents. They want something more definite, the teachers want something more definite and specific to give them, the tests want something more definite on which to test them, and so we fall into teaching a false but easily transmissible picture of American society. And since people are shaped to some extent by their education, we fall into the danger, by presenting a conception of separate and different groups fixed through time as distinct elements in our society, of making our future one which conforms to our teaching, of arresting the progress of change and adaptation that have created a common society, a single nation."

New York has not developed an actual curriculum framework. "One Nation, Many Peoples: A Declaration of Cultural Interdependence" is a set of recommendations, not a syllabus. It is expected that the creation of curricular guidelines, instructional materials, and lesson plans will take many years.

CIVITAS, a curriculum framework to be released this September, is a guide to civic education for elementary and secondary schools. This comprehensive work, over 700 pages long, was developed under the auspices of the California-based Center for Civic Education and Council for the Advancement of Citizenship in Washington D.C., with the cooperation of many education associations. Since 1988, the project has involved as authors a large number of prominent curriculum experts, historians, and political scientists. They have brought substance, accuracy, evenhandedness, and intelligence to the sometimes opaque domain of civic education. The units of the framework are more intellectually refined than other civics guides recently constructed. The first page considers the rationale for civic participation, using the perspectives of Aristotle, Sidney Hook, and Benjamin Rush. The framework also stresses civic virtue, which in itself will be to some educators a daringly normative—or innovative—idea.

CIVITAS states in its introduction, "We believe that civic virtue embraces thinking and acting in such a way that individual rights are viewed in the light of the public good and that the common good includes the basic protection of individual rights." CIVITAS then goes further. It considers issues of character and public morality, exploring, for example, the values of charity, humility, and tolerance. It examines the concepts of individual responsibility, self-discipline, and civic-mindedness. The framework is frank in noting lapses of human rights and political repression in Africa, China, Latin America, and other regions, making distinctions between democracy and other forms of government. The CIVITAS framework—like many "consensus" curriculum guides—strains to include all points of view on an abundance of subjects. As a result, it is in places overly long; sometimes it is repetitious. An abbreviated version will appear in the future. Thorough and sensible, CIVITAS is an outstanding general reference for any teacher who needs direction or guidance in preparing civics lessons or government courses.

FROM THE EDITOR

With the Summer 1991 issue, the *Social Studies Review* enters its third year of publication. At this time we want to acknowledge and thank again the foundations, the subscribers, and many others who have helped us launch the *Review* and the American Textbook Council.

The Council has worked hard to broaden its support. In addition to original funding from the William H. Donner Foundation, the Council has now received financial backing from the Harry and Lynde Bradley Foundation, the Earhart Foundation, the Richard Lounsbery Foundation, the New York Community Trust, the John M. Olin Foundation, and several hundred private donors.

While we remain a young organization, the Council has made enormous progress in a short amount of time. The Council and *Review* were cited as major vehicles for textbook improvement and educational reform in chairman Lynne V. Cheney's November 1990 report, *Tyrannical Machines*, for the National Endowment for the Humanities. It is evident that major textbook publishers are paying close attention to us. Several of them have requested permission to reprint articles from the *Review*. They have purchased thousands of copies for internal distribution.

Last year we increased the size of the *Review* from twelve to sixteen pages. We expanded the mailing list through new subscriptions and referrals. The *Review* now reaches the nation's most influential educators, historians, editors, and public officials. More important, the circulation of nearly 4,000 is broad-based, reaching the school superintendents, principals, and teachers who make decisions about textbook adoption and the curriculum.

In the coming academic year, the Council will undertake several new initiatives. These include—in response to numerous requests for guidance from district-level educators—the preparation of a general handbook and standard of review for textbooks in language arts and social studies. Also, in time, we plan

to commission an analytical report of religion in the curriculum, exploring how social studies textbooks treat the subject and what improvements might be made. This summer, I will be developing curricular materials in California state history—taught at the fourth grade level—at the Huntington Library and Southwest Museum in Los Angeles.

The next issue of the *Review* will be devoted to a special review of high school economics and economics textbooks. This winter, we will be publishing a databank on textbook usage. As always, should you have any ideas for the Council and *Review*, let us know. For those of you who do not see this issue before Labor Day, we hope you have had a fine summer and wish you in advance a productive and invigorating fall season.

SOCIAL STUDIES REVIEW

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SOCIAL STUDIES REVIEW

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A BULLETIN OF THE AMERICAN TEXTBOOK COUNCIL

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ECONOMICS: A REVIEW

Economics is a fundamental component of the social studies. Sometimes it is studied directly, through theory and principle, and sometimes in applied forms, through history or geography. In either case economics includes ideas and concepts that explain much about the workings of human society past, present, and future. The branch of social studies called economics can be strengthed through a historical approach, sturdy subject matter, and a mixture of theory and practice.

In this special issue of the *Social Studies Review*, supported by the John M. Olin Foundation, we turn to this often neglected area of the social studies curriculum. We review the leading high school textbooks in the field. Some initial thoughts arise. In what way does the study of economics align with a history-centered approach to social studies? What is economics' place in the larger realm of civic education? How should an economics program be organized, especially in sensitive areas that brush against ideology? Should an economics program affirm private markets and capitalism, and how should it deal with thorny issues like regulation, income distribution, and the environment? At what grade levels should economics be studied as a concrete subject and not through other disciplines? And finally, is economics simply beyond the grasp of most children and adolescents?

The *Review* will try to offer some provisional answers to these important questions. To do so, it includes three original articles by respected educators who have thought seriously about the content and presentation of economics in schools. While the authors do not reach the same conclusions, their essays illuminate some of the salient issues in economic education. Two essays offer provocative—and differing—conclusions about the place of economics in the social studies

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Christopher Columbus and the National Council for Social Studies.

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curriculum. Another essay introduces economics' two branches, macroeconomics and microeconomics, explaining the significance of each in human life.

Some social studies educators express concern over the place of economics in school programs that emphasize history and geography. They maintain that economics could be crowded out of curriculum. This is unlikely. If anything, economics—which has long been a component in European high schools—has gained new adherents during the last decade and will continue to do so in the 1990s.

Many courses labeled economics are consumer education and personal finance courses in masquerade. Practicality crowds out theory and principle. Learning to read a label or lease should not be confused with pure economics. Many social studies educators are unwilling to make such distinctions of quality and course content, preferring to raise phony questions about a "narrow" and "limiting" history-centered approach to the subject.

Economics is the study of scarce material resources and how to allocate them. Economics necessarily brings to bear questions of political and social justice. The world will never have sufficient income or resources to satisfy every desire. Indeed, it is hardly conceivable that all human beings will ever have access to the flush toilets, refrigerators, television sets, and automobiles that poor people in the United States and other advanced industrial nations take for granted. The environmental consequences of limitless human wants is potentially horrifying. Population growth continues inexorably, especially in regions of the world that have low per capita levels of product. Most of the world is aggressively acquisitive and exploitative. Only the most affluent and utopian element of the world's population—often driven by guilt and a personal understanding of marginal utility—shows any interest in curbing human appetites or making massive transnational transfers of wealth in the name of global justice. Is economics then truly the dismal science, exploring the dark and greedy recesses of the human soul? Or is it a reasonable inquiry into how to provide the greatest good for the greatest number?

Economics includes the study of choices, trade-offs, and opportunity costs. It is a rational exploration of the material world: what are its ingredients, how shall it be devised, who gets how much, and to what degree is it expandable. Economics can be historical, quantitative, or practical in method, descriptive or prescriptive in nature. Above all, economics is the study of self-interest and public welfare.

Americans live in an economic system called private enterprise and market capitalism. This system differs from the "free" and unbridled capitalism that to some evokes an image of Lancashire coal mines or a golden age of rugged individualism. After all, through the twentieth century, government—national, state, and local—has taken awesome regulative and welfare responsibilities. Still, many of the textbooks reviewed below avoid the use of the word capitalism, perhaps because the word itself suggests that Americans continue to live under a harsh and exploitative system based on profits and entrepreneurial pirates.

Few would argue that economic self-interest creates a perfect world, just as few can deny Adam Smith's dictum in 1776 that, "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest." Nor should we forget that Smith's magisterial book, *The Wealth of Nations*, was published in the same year as the Declaration of Independence, with its remarkable contention that Americans had a right to liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

During the 1980s, Americans could monitor the excesses of finance and consumption from that little savings and loan on Main Street to the boutiques of Rodeo Drive, in stark contrast to the growing number of Americans who lived in desperate conditions outside the labor market. They could also note that the Securities Exchange Commission and U.S. Treasury acted to curb abuses and punish wrongdoers, thus regulating successfully on behalf of free markets.

Most resources in the United States are privately owned, as distinct from diverse socialist and "command" economic systems in which basic capital resources are owned and controlled by government. While statist assumptions persist in some textbook lessons, for years now Americans have watched

capitalism's growing global appeal. The economic system is more promising, perhaps, to striving immigrants from Korea or Mexico than to some university professors. Continuing advances in communications and transportation accelerate the trend toward global capitalism, now the single multinational force of economic organization. Computer and satellite-driven messages make instantaneous global transfers of currency, capital, and ownership possible. Intensifying international exchange seems inevitable in the years to come, not only in the Pacific Rim but also on the European continent.

On account of world affairs, economics is now an especially timely subject. For over two years, American educators have watched the rapid demise of Marxism and the challenge to state-driven economies from Prague to Turkestan, ending decades of authoritarian production and political oppression. The Soviet economic system has proved itself inefficient and incapable, built on faulty premises about human nature, unable to produce and distribute the basic goods that people need to live, unable to spur human capital toward greater productivity, and unable even to make good on the egalitarian premises on which it is based.

> *The ideas of economists and political philosophers, both when they are right and when they are wrong, are more powerful than is commonly understood. Indeed the world is ruled by little else. Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist. Madmen in authority, who hear voices in the air, are distilling their frenzy from some academic scribbler of a few years back.*
>
> —*John Maynard Keynes,* The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money (1936)

How the Eastern European and Soviet economies will manage in the coming months—as they head into deep winter—remains a disturbing unknown. The transition to contractual liberty, free markets, and the pursuit of happiness in this far-flung region of the world remains theoretical, not actual, and any such economic reform poses vast questions of reorientation. Unfortunately, economics and other social studies textbooks do not address such pressing and topical issues.

The economic breakdown of the Soviet Union underscores some facts of public life that the United States and other capitalistic nations take for granted. These begin with private property and protection of that property through title and ownership; the ability to buy and sell in open markets; the freedom to make and participate in markets.

Where should the study of economics begin? Not with silly courses that teach sixteen-year-olds how to balance their checkbooks and register complaints with the Better Business Bureau. By high school, all students should be able to recognize some relation between economics and historical change. The agricultural revolution circa 10,000 B.C. introduced cultivation and civilized settlement. The study of the industrial revolution 250 years ago—and the replacement of muscular with mechanical power—is basic to understanding the modern age and the incredible material advancements of our times. Students need to understand the fundamental differences between traditional, authoritarian, and market economies. They should study basic concepts such as consumption and investment, demand and supply, competition and monopoly, government management, and in an interdependent world, global trade.

Seven Textbooks

Economics is a complicated subject. Sometimes the most subtle of the social sciences, it can only go so far down into applied usage before it lapses into consumer education or career training. As with physics or algebra, mastery builds on basic principles. In textbooks that serve and challenge a wide number of students, simple is often better.

Simplicity is not an automatic virtue in economics textbooks. Gross distortions, sloppy exegesis, and flawed information can result from omitting or sidestepping arcane principles. But simple sometimes means accessible, direct, and instructive. Most "economics" comes closer to consumer education or personal finance than to the real thing. At the

low end of the social studies spectrum, an abundance of mindless life adjustment materials fly under the banner of practicality.

One surprisingly good text with a practical orientation exists. *Economics: Today and Tomorrow* (Glencoe/McGraw-Hill) tries to mesh economics with utilitarian lessons that will assist students who may be ending their formal education at high school graduation. Paul Samuelson, it is not. But the book contains clear treatments of economic concepts and satisfactory lessons on housing contracts, banking practices, and other everyday affairs. While overdoing consumerism, the text manages this dual approach with some dexterity.

Teachers of pure economics courses will probably shun this book because of excessive consumer information, which comprises about half of the text. But *Economics: Today and Tomorrow* tries to bridges the "real world" and subjects such as the Federal Reserve System, demand and supply, and Keynesian economics, treating these subjects in an appealing, direct format and style.

Another widely used easy reader is *Basic Economic Principles* (Glencoe/McGraw-Hill). Like *Economics: Today and Tomorrow*, it is well designed. While the book contains less text, lessons do not wander into a helpful hints and how-to-it mode. The emphasis on economic principles is welcome. But too many shallow units make this a disappointing book. Confusing and incorrect passages impede the way: Why, for example, does *Basic Economic Principles* say that oligopolies "work as if they were one big monopoly even though they are several different firms"? Another question: Is the Times Beach, Missouri fiasco really a good example of federal environmental responsiveness and regulation?

Here is an excerpt from the book: "It is possible for resources to be allocated incorrectly in a competitive economic system. When this happens, the government can take action to correct the problem. For example, businesses that are run to earn a profit can harm the environment. A factory may find it less expensive to dump wastes in a river than to provide proper disposal. Such an action would hurt people who live downstream of [sic] the factory. It would be a wasteful use of some of our own resources." While a student or teacher might receive some sense of the idea that this passage is trying to convey, the issue of positive and negative externalities, especially in highly populated areas, deserves more thorough and sensitive treatment.

McDougal, Littell Economics (McDougal, Littell, 1988) is designed for more able students than *Basic Economic Principles*. The book contains many case studies and outside readings, which vary in quality, as do the lessons. The book is well organized. But the text is often curious or misleading, as with the caption: "Oil spills can ruin beaches and kill wildlife, but they boost GNP."

McDougal, Littell Economics fails utterly in a poorly named section called "Economic Rights." The introduction begins: "As an individual, you feel you have certain rights. Among the rights important to you may be the right to drive a car and the right to own goods. It is sometimes necessary for parents or another adult to protect the rights of children. Similarly, it is sometimes necessary for the government to protect an individual's rights. In this section, you will learn about the role of government in protecting economic rights." The section goes on: "A right is an action or benefit that is just, good, or proper. The Declaration of Independence includes life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness as inalienable rights. Among the rights the French fought for in 1789 were liberty, equality, and fraternity. In both these instances, individuals felt that it was the government's responsibility to protect their rights."

In subsequent paragraphs, these muddy and flawed statements are mixed with the idea of an open market, of property rights, and of the right to personal safety. Predictably, a hodgepodge of curative regulations, protected by federal law, follows. The unit results in being at once mysterious and empty. At least it does contain a passage from Upton Sinclair's 1906 novel, *The Jungle*, to add some good writing to an otherwise forgettable text.

Four preferable general high school economics textbooks do exist. They are not necessarily "harder." What they share are legible formats and straightforward language.

Economics: Free Enterprise in Action (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich) is one of them. This

book benefits from a reference section in the back—preferable to a mere unit on consumer economics—that contains an economic atlas, world economic data, a chronology of economic events, and yes, a "consumer handbook."

The book contains some inspired primary material. Short excerpts of writings by economists from Thomas Sowell to Barbara Ward punctuate the book, and *Economics: Free Enterprise in Action* might be excused for including a passage from Alvin Toffler. But the text is a little choppy. In places it suffers from overloaded subject coverage and too much jargon. Overall, the book is rich and varied in substance. One area where *Economics: Free Enterprise in Action* does not succeed is in comparative economics. For example, in an effort to be "balanced" about economic systems and generous toward the Third World, the book tries to sanitize the forced relocation of nine million people and the grotesque failure of authoritarian socialism in Tanzania.

Invitation to Economics (Scott, Foresman) is as good or better book written at about the same level of readability. The format is clear, with adequate text, good illustrations and graphs, and tight review sections. It covers the bases from demand and supply to the Federal Reserve. The book has a strong unit on comparative economic systems. Moreover, *Invitation to Economics* is historical in orientation; it even contains a special discussion of economic history. Finally, the book parks a short section on consumer economics discreetly in the rear.

At 321 pages, *Economics for Decision Making* (D.C. Heath) is much shorter than the five or six hundred pages that comprises an average high school economics textbook. But absent are the fractured text, pictorial sideshows, cute profiles, and practical tips that clutter some of the foregoing textbooks. *Economics for Decision Making* has a clear, readable, strong text with tables, graphs, photographs, and review sections—informative and useful— but subordinate in format to the text itself. The idea of simple is better in an economics textbook comes alive in this book, even though in places the book is stripped down to such a degree that some teachers will consider it "elementary."

In some tricky areas of public policy, such as social ethics, where other textbooks are fatuous or clumsy, *Economics for Decision Making* is direct and even wise. It quotes Nobel Prize-winning economist Kenneth Arrow: "The endurance of the social order, the sense that we are all members of one another, is vital to civilization. Such a notion is essential to the free enterprise system itself which cannot flourish without such a social structure."

In comparison to *McDougal, Littell's Economics'* idea of economic rights, the book says: "Americans believe they have a right to some goods and services. Therefore, in its role of guardian, the government acts to provide [them]." Its section on comparative economics is clear and informative. Such perplexing topics as comparative advantage, the gold standard, and balance of payments are explained with finesse, doing justice to the subjects without falling into the black hole of technicality.

Teachers of high-level elective high school courses who find these admirable books slightly superficial might turn to *Economics: Our American Economy (Longman)*, a sensible, sprightly, well-written book that surveys the main features of economics. While advanced in coverage, it is less forbidding than introductory college textbooks.

Of course, some teachers of Advanced Placement-type courses will want to use introductory college books—or at least sections thereof, a case for customized economics textbook publishing at McGraw-Hill, the dominant publisher of high school and college economics texts.

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WHY SCHOOLS SHOULD TEACH ECONOMICS

By Mark C. Schug

Economics is increasingly recognized as a key part of social studies and citizenship education. Many states have expanded their curriculum to include more instruction in economics, and economics is stitched into the fabric of school-level history, geography, civics, and world affairs. Twenty-eight states now require that economics be taught in the school curriculum.

Why is economic education so important? First, young people already participate in economic life. They influence many purchase decisions of their parents from toys to automobiles. Moreover, they participate in the economy as workers. About one-third of high school students hold part-time jobs. Second, young people are able to vote at the age of eighteen, in effect, participating in public life. It is risky to hold off or deny these active citizens the chance to learn how their economy works. Third, we cannot depend on young people to learn economics in colleges. Many of them don't go to college, and if they do, they may not take an economics course. Fourth, while there is abundant evidence that young people can learn economics, they are often confused about basic economic ideas. There is much misunderstanding about economic life. Economics is not always learned through intuition and experience, and one of its uses is in teaching the young about paradox and counterintuitive thinking.

What are some of the common misunderstandings? Young people often think that a nation's wealth is based largely on the possession of natural resources, for example. By this measure, the Soviet Union, with its abundance of natural resources, including oil, copper, chromium, gold, silver, tin, zinc, mercury, bauxite, cobalt, and much more, should be among the world's wealthiest nations. So also should Argentina, Brazil, and many others.

Japan, in contrast, is a nation with no natural resources. If natural resource endowments are the test, then Japan should be among the world's poorest nations. A student who has participated in a well-designed economics program should understand why market and trade-encouraging economies tend to produce and distribute wealth while command and trade-discouraging economies tend to produce and distribute poverty.

Here is another example. Young people often think that trade between nations is a zero-sum game. That is, there can only be winners and losers. They shudder when they hear that the Japanese have bought another American firm or that the Saudis are buying American farmland. Most recently, the trade debate has focused on reducing trade barriers between the United States and Mexico. President Salinas of Mexico believes that it is in Mexico's self-interest to encourage free trade with its neighbor. Yet, the United States has an economy thirty times larger than the Mexican economy. How can Mexico expect to gain when trading with such a giant? The reasoning used by economists since Adam Smith and David Ricardo has explained that unfettered trade is of benefit to both parties.

American young people—like adults—do not know economics very well, according to a number of reliable surveys. Students tend to perform better on items stressing such fundamental concepts in microeconomics as scarcity, supply, demand, and market price. Students perform least well in items testing their understanding of macroeconomics and international economics, including such concepts as inflation, unemployment, and productivity. Studies in several countries reveal how young people reason about various economic ideas. For example, young children think that prices are determined by the size of a product. Big things are thought to cost a lot while little things do not. So, for example, cars and houses are expensive while candy is not. To children banks are simply safe places to store money. People get back precisely what they deposit. Property ownership is also a puzzle to children. The owner of a good is the person who is nearest it.

How do children think about economic ideas? Their economic reasoning about such concepts as scarcity, money, exchange, price, and profit becomes progressively abstract and flexible with increasing age. However, reasoning does not improve evenly with each concept.

For example, a clear idea of profit, which is essential to understanding a market economy, does not emerge until around age eleven.

As early as kindergarten and first grade, children are developing an understanding of economic ideas such as scarcity. Clearly, some instruction can begin even at these early grade levels. The development of children's reasoning about the physical world has been widely researched and is usually described as occurring in a series of identifiable, age-related stages. Jean Piaget's work is perhaps the most widely known in this area. His research indicated that very young children are unable to understand abstractions. During the elementary school years most children are in the concrete-operations stage, which means that they need to manipulate objects in their environment to understand the world.

Children's reasoning about economic ideas—including concepts such as scarcity and disparities in personal income—tends to follow a developmental sequence. Their reasoning becomes more abstract and flexible with age and includes greater recognition of other people's points. With age, children depend less on concrete, physical appearances to explain their ideas.

Reasoning about nearly all the economic concepts shows a pattern of gradual improvement with age. Nonetheless, mature reasoning about some concepts appears more rapidly than does an understanding of other concepts. Advanced reasoning about concepts that have more concrete referents or that are in children's immediate experiences seems to emerge sooner than does mature reasoning about concepts that are more remote. Conversely, learning some economic ideas, even though they may be defined as fundamental, may be difficult. Perhaps the best example is the notion of profit, which is central to understanding how a market economy works.

Many states have increased their economic education requirements. Usually, economics is integrated into the kindergarten through twelfth grade social studies curriculum. Sixteen states require a high school economics course as a graduation requirement. States, such as California, that have been leaders in curriculum reform, now require a semester course in high school economics. The 1989 National Commission for the Social Studies called for economics to be taught at grade twelve as a semester course, or, to be taught in a two-semester course on economics and government.

One major problem is finding competent teachers. According to a recent survey by the Wisconsin Council on Economic Education, the preparation of state teachers was similar to what has been found in national surveys. Forty-four percent of elementary teachers had no economic coursework in college or graduate school. Thirty-one percent of the secondary social studies teachers had taken one or no economics courses.

The evident lack of formal economics background was reflected in a corresponding lack of confidence expressed by teachers of their understanding of economics and in their ability to teach it. Two-thirds of them rated their ability to teach economics as fair or poor. Teachers reported that they were not confident in their knowledge of economic concepts like opportunity cost, monetary policy, fiscal policy, and comparative advantage.

Teachers were even more unsure of their understanding of current economic issues. A large majority of the teachers expressed a high degree of uncertainty about confusing items of topical debate and policy such as deregulation, the future solvency of Social Security, foreign trade, and the peril of federal and state budget deficits. This is not surprising, of course, given the complexity of these subjects and the challenge of making them intelligible to students in high school.

These challenges not withstanding, the operation of our market economy, issues of government regulation and private enterprise, and the consideration of an emerging global economic network are subjects too important and integral to the present and future to ignore at the pre-college level. In the coming decade high school economics will probably continue to evolve from an elective course reserved for college-bound students to a central component of the social studies curriculum.

Mark C. Schug is a professor of education at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the director of programs for the Wisconsin Council on Economic Education.

WHY ECONOMICS IS TOUGH FOR TEN-YEAR-OLDS

By Donald N. McCloskey

Elementary school students learn, as Woody Allen says, that 80 percent of success is showing up on time. So our sixth graders do well if they show up and pay attention. But by high school they have learned to their dismay that showing up is not enough, and that a successful student has to memorize things at home, too. French irregular verbs do not get into one's head without some pounding. So our college-bound twelfth graders have become demon memorizers, or else they are not college bound.

The job in college, though, is to understand. College teachers have to work hard to drive out the notion that learning means highlighting the textbook. Learning is understanding, subordinating yourself to a field of study, making yourself into a disciple of good thinkers. It is not the dumping of miscellaneous facts into your head as so much "content," though of course you have to keep exercising those earlier tricks of showing up on time and doing the homework. Then comes critical thinking about a subject, and then synthesizing content. It's wearing, and it is one reason why success at one level of education or life is so poorly correlated with success at the next level.

A few people understand economic arguments the first time they hear them, in high school or early college. I was not among such students. Usually such precocity can be accounted because these students have non-late-adolescent personalities that mimic the model of economic man. Unfortunately, I know people who are like that. They did very well in their first economics course and went on to become professors of law. Occasionally, and more admirably, young people can understand economics because they have mature powers of imagining themselves in the shoes of economic man. They are like the rare person who writes good fiction at nineteen, the Flannery O'Connors of economics. These people go on to become professors or novelists or journalists or teachers.

Most of us, though, have to slog. Economic education is like a spiral staircase, going over and over at a higher and higher level the same ground—scarcity, supply and demand, rational choice, entry and exit, aggregate behavior. At the nth repetition one suddenly arrives on the right floor. Aha! I remember studying for my qualifying exams in the second year of graduate school, going over for the nth time the rationale for the price system. It suddenly hit me what this stuff was all about. "Aha!" said I to no one in particular. "Prices are good because they allocate scarce resources, not because they are fair!" Well before, I had mouthed those very same words on an exam. But at that stage I was still memorizing, not understanding.

As John Dewey used to say, I didn't feel it on my pulse. Years later, I had a second epiphany. "Aha! Prices are only one of many possible systems of allocating scarce resources (violence or standing in line are others), but less wasteful than most!" Something we think we are teaching to our twelth graders or freshmen took years and years of repetition to sink in.

Now why is this? I was not especially dense. Most economists will tell you similar stories. True, I was not one of Nature's Economists. In high school I disliked math, though I was never quite as hopeless at it as my father—a practical scientist—was. My idea of being practical was to declare a college major in history, since I had done well at that, too, it being in my way of thinking a literary subject. Like most students who imagine they know what they are going to major in before getting to college, I did so because I could conceive of the subject. We didn't have economics courses at my high school. At age eighteen economics was the furthest thing from my mind.

Well, not perhaps the furthest thing, because I was then a socialist and fancied therefore that I knew a thing or two about economics. The book that made me a socialist was *The Grapes of Wrath*, which I read late in high school. I had browsed the local Carnegie library, attracted mostly to the nonfiction shelves, and had tasted there the revolutionary romance of Prince Kropotkin the Russian anarchist and of other classics in leftwing thought. "Tasted" is the word. I was a Pete

Seeger sort of radical. Not a great deal of thought was involved, mainly just heart-rending choruses of "We Shall Not Be Moved." To this day I astonish conservative acquaintances by knowing and singing the old songs of the left, from "Union Maid" to "The Peatbog Soldiers." The socialists, alas, have the best songs, because songs are a romantic genre and revolutions, staffed by youthful true believers, are grim exercises in romance.

Extreme political commitment is a good preparation for economics. Some students want to save the world, as I did, and therefore want to learn a subject they correctly reckon is important for the purpose. Anyone who has gone down this road has learned an important fact: that most of the world's problems could be solved by making the rest of the world as rich as suburban America. Other students want to save the world, too, but want to save it mainly from heady projects of social engineering. They learn the other important lesson: that the world's problems cannot be solved by governments.

As I studied economics, I started to shift to the right politically. The study of economics makes one learn how stupid the usual "solutions" can be. One learns for example in the first course—but this is another lesson that is slow to sink in—that protecting our jobs with tariffs against the Japanese is a good way to become poor. One learns that offsetting the business cycle sometimes does not work. One learns that social evils are sometimes not easy to fix and are seldom the consequence of individual evils. Economics steps beyond the lawyerly, Ralph Naderish notion that if we could just sue the bastards then all would be well.

Economists talk a lot and nervously about the scientific standing of the field, but many of them have a defective notion of what constitutes science. Enthusiasm for free trade, to take a specific example, is practically a marker of someone who has studied economics seriously. It can be proven on a blackboard. That's the problem. One can also prove on a blackboard that slight failures of the assumptions lead to quite different conclusions. Some economists never recover their faith in the market once they realize that the blackboard proofs, though useful guides to factual study, are not conclusive.

A laissez-faire conclusion is not necessarily warranted, scientifically speaking. But neither, to be fair, is there a scientific warrant in economics for the easy view that wants the government—the only "we" available—to solve problems it is ill-equipped to solve. As James Q. Wilson wrote recently in *The New Republic*, "Unfortunately, there are a lot of tasks that no one, least of all the government, knows how to do right."

My own slide towards conservatism was accelerated by involvement in the anti-war movement. As it dawned on some of us in the Vietnam generation how incompetent a government could be in running its main project, war, some of us decided that the government was not likely to be the solution in more delicate matters either.

The trouble with economics as a high school course or for that matter as a college course is that it does not draw on the passions of young people.

What turned me from a history major to an economics major early in college was a push and a pull. The push was taking courses from the celebrated historians Frank Freidel and William Langer. Their courses made it clear that history requires one to know something, in fact quite a lot, and therefore entailes many hours of tedious reading. This is not what I had bargained for. Nor did I like the postponement of synthesis in history. Just as I wanted a Marxist formula right away for politics, I wanted a formula right away for history. If Freidel or Langer had been equipped with formulas that so many of my colleagues later endorsed, I would have stayed with history, becoming in the end, I suppose, a politically correct professor. As it was, ironically, I became through economics a professor of history, but of a different stripe.

The pull was a book that has made hundreds of economists: Robert Heilbroner's *The Worldly Philosophers*, first published in 1953, now in its sixth edition. Again there is a political irony, since Heilbroner is a social democrat. I read him in the summer after my freshman year and instantly decided to major

in economics. The book is a beautifully written set of brief lives of economists from Adam Smith to Freiderich Hayek and John Kenneth Galbraith, giving young readers the impression of understanding economics—not economics as taught but economics as perhaps it ought to be taught.

For Heilbroner's book teaches by way of personality and story, Marx and his boils scribbling in the British Museum, Keynes and his ballet dancer. Unhappily, economics is in fact taught to high schoolers and undergraduates by precept and theory. Here, the teacher intones, is the general formulation of the law of demand. Here are a few examples. Here is the definition of elasticity. Here is a useless application of it, a mostly useless idea. Only one made passionate some other way could love such a subject.

I think the trouble with economics as a high school course or for that matter as a college course is that it does not draw on the passions of young people. The miser in literature is always an old man. In truth this can be said of many subjects: philosophers and politicians are old, too. Young people can emote. Young people can memorize. Young people can follow doctrines with enthusiasm. Can young people study a philosophical subject on its own terms?

Heilbroner was right to call economists "the worldly philosophers." Economists are more interested than most philosophers in such worldly things as the futures market in onions or an appointment to the Federal Reserve Board. But philosophers they are, trying to achieve insight by sheer thinking. Many economists have other strings to their bow, such as social history or social engineering. But in most economic music the philosophical string carries the tune.

Why then was I slow to understand this aspect of economics? The answer, I suggest, is that philosophical subjects cannot be taught directly to people below twenty-five years of age. My colleagues in philosophy would probably agree. They would be appalled if state legislatures were to mandate courses in philosophy. Don't laugh: ethics is a branch of philosophy and, startlingly, some legislators think it efficacious to make it a course, another "skill." I know what little I learned from a philosophy course in my freshman year: to respect the names and lives of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Kant, Hegel, and Kierkegaard. I was *nineteen*. You cannot expect a teenager to understand the doctrines beyond a certain factual recall, one damned doctrine after another. The same, I am afraid, is true of economics. This bad news, notice, is coming from someone who has written numerous textbooks in economics, and who wants the whole world to learn the subject.

The trouble with teaching economics philosophically is that a sixteen- or a nineteen-year-old does not have the experience of life to make the philosophy speak to him. It is just words, not wise reflections on his life. He hasn't had a life, economically speaking. He has lived mainly in a socialist economy (namely, his household, centrally planned by his parents, depending on loyalty rather than exit). He therefore has no conception of how markets organize production. He probably works at a market job (too many students do), but without that sense of urgency that comes over someone with a family to support. He does not have any economic history under his belt—no experience of the Reagan Recession or the Carter Inflation, not to mention Great Depression or the German Hyperinflation.

One can teach economics, on the other hand, politically. Such an approach at least draws on passions that young people can feel. But it is impossible to do so in a high school and not easy in college. Most parents do not thrill to seeing their pleasantly quiescent teenagers turned into radicals of left or right, no matter how much insight into society comes along with it. They get the school board or board of regents to stop it. The only way to teach economics to young people, I reckon, is to teach it by indirection. Put the economics in the background of more experiential courses in history or vocational education or literature. The formal methods can be learned but they will be forgotton immediately because they do not refer to anything in the student's life.

Didactic "relevance" does not work; what works is the irrelevance of literature and history or the entire relevance of home economics and auto mechanics. In these subjects you can teach economics. One can worry about the mechanistic way that high school debating programs have developed,

teaching the debaters to talk fast and talk superficially. The problem seems to be that the programs ask students to become passionate about subjects whose obvious "relevance" is in fact obvious only to the middle-aged: Should we abolish nuclear weapons? Should we finance the reform of the Soviet economy? I suggest they return to an ancient pedagogy in rhetoric and use great fictional texts as the year's subject. Imagine many thousands of high school debaters spending the year asking, "Was the wrath of Achilles justified?"

Economics should be taught through a similarly tacit dimension. Let students learn about life in its rounded form, through history or in shop, then later, perhaps about the age of twenty-five, show them the wonders of an economic point of view. Alfred Marshall, the British economist responsible for much of modern economics, defined economics a century ago as "the study of mankind in the ordinary business of life." Students need some ordinary business before they turn to its study. That's why for many of us the study of economics does not take hold until youth has lost its flower.

Donald N. McCloskey is a professor of economics and history at the University of Iowa.

The Joint Council on Economic Education has led the way in developing instructional programs in economic education. Formed in 1949, the Joint Council aims to improve the teaching of economics at the precollege level. There are 50 state councils affiliated with the Joint Council and over 280 Centers for Economic Education on college and university campuses around the nation.

The New York City-based Council offers curriculum materials for kindergarten through twelfth grade. It also trains classroom teachers in the use of these materials. The organization publishes *A Framework for Teaching the Basic Concepts*, a 71-page syllabus and teacher's guide for high school economics programs. The Council had also developed a national set of tests in economics for the elementary, middle school, and high school levels.

ECONOMICS, HUMAN NATURE AND HISTORY

By William N. Parker

Before considering the actual content of an economics program in schools, it might be useful to explore some premises and underpinnings of the market economy and private enterprise. Why is economics a revealing and significant social science, helping to explain how the world works? It is important to understand some of the philosophical and historical interrelations.

Microeconomics is the vessel in which certain nineteenth-century morality—of thrift, self-restraint, calculation, and "rationality"—assumes a world possessed of fundamental stability with stable governments, protective of property rights and with individuals stable in their values, disregarding their groupings into social classes. In such a world, reasonably dependable expectations can be formed about the future. The social group, composed of individuals, families, and small units of willing producers, through daily work can gain individual rewards of security and even wealth.

Microeconomics does not teach that this will bring happiness. It has long been known that virtue is its own—often its only—reward. But it asserts that, in the human condition, for societies and for individuals, economizing behavior—a careful assessment of the future, a husbanding of resources, a seeking out of the most likely course of action, the most probably rewarding course of spending—will yield the material basis for as much happiness as a group of people of given resources and natural endowments can attain. All who obey the rules will prosper.

They will receive back just that amount of income and product by which the whole would be diminished if the contribution of their individual labor and the use of their invested funds were withdrawn. Of course, in the short-run, those who disobey the rules may prosper most, but that is only until prudent bankers, competitive markets, and zealous policemen, catch up with them.

The secret of microeconomics, then, is the "maximizing" of a return, subject to the

constraints of the situation—the available information, the resources, the social relationships—in which an individual, or a society as a whole, has been placed. Thus it will be readily seen that microeconomics offers a set of rules governing far beyond merely economic behavior, beyond the questions of where to invest more, what sort of household budget to construct and follow, which of two jobs to choose, which of two careers to pursue.

Microeconomics' great principle can be applied to all the acts and decisions of what is called "everyday life"—whether to walk to work or to drive, which route to take for a trip, what friends to make, what person of the opposite sex to favor, whether to marry and if so how many children to spawn. Only one circumstance, it would seem, is not covered by the logic of microeconomics: passions other than blind greed and self-concern. All of life's other compulsive or impulsive behaviors resist foresight, calculation, and restraint. And even here, the microtheorist, sitting like God above it all, organizing a society in a state of general equilibrium, can envisage making allowances for individuals, for quantities of passion in optimal amounts, just such as would stabilize and not irretrievably disrupt society's expectations of reasonably predictable behavior in the aggregate.

Economics has, however, a second half called macroeconomics. As is so often the case in life—in marriage, in sport, in politics—there is a dialectic, an unresolvable tension between the two halves that gives the activity of the players its interest, and in the end its valuable results. The behavior of individuals in their economic (and social) activities contains a large, unstable, unpredictable element. Under certain conditions this element is not canceled out by their behavior en masse, but may gain a mass momentum by panicky imitation; indeed in such circumstances, the cumulated responses, initially perfectly rational from an individual perspective from moment to moment may still be self-defeating for the group and so for individuals.

It is this characteristic of the world of markets that gives birth to the daily news. News is about change, the movements of the whole economy and the efforts to control change and to guide the economy along one path or another. Young people, whether they live in a democracy or in a totalitarian state, have some nuisance value to the authorities and so retain some little room for independent judgment. They will need then to be kept informed about the news in some version.

Students need some primitive vocabulary and some appreciation of how the political system, in which they will be encased, endeavors to handle such phenomena as inflation, unemployment, new technologies, economic growth and economic decay, political unrest and economic chaos in the world at large. As part of this training for roles in the adult world, it is well for students to gain at least a little perspective as early as possible in their entry into responsible political and social life. It helps to have stocked the mind with some stories of the past—its troubles and its triumphs.

There is a moral for young people in this, too. Thrift and cautious calculation are not alone enough for economic survival, much less for economic progress or success. A robust, thriving material economic life, for an individual and so for a society as well, requires some risk taking, some degree of alert enterprise. Max Weber, the great German sociologist and economic historian, found the dialectic in the tensions created by the two contradictory aspects of the Puritan temperament: the "rational," prudent, self-denying, obsessively rule-minded, ultimately bureaucratic; and the intensely individualistic, self-secure, bold and risk-taking, with actions answerable only to its conscience and to God.

J. M. Keynes gave the dichotomy unforgettable expression in an economist's language in the historical chapter of *A Treatise on Money*:. "It has been usual to think of the accumulated wealth of the world as having been painfully built up out of the voluntary abstinence of individuals from the immediate enjoyment of consumption which we call Thrift. But it should be obvious that mere abstinence is not enough by itself to build cities or drain fens. . . . It is enterprise which builds and improves the world's possessions. . . not only may thrift exist without enterprise, but as soon as thrift gets ahead of enterprise, it positively discourages the recovery of enterprise and sets up a vicious circle by its adverse

effect on profits. If Enterprise is afoot, wealth accumulates whatever may be happening to Thrift; and if Enterprise is asleep, wealth decays whatever Thrift may be doing."

Exposure to a coherent study of the materials of economic history serves several purposes in a high school education. First, and perhaps most successfully, it enables the history courses to fill out plausible stories of the nation's—and, preferably, the world's—political and social experience. Our age is a very present-minded one, but it is also notably materialistic. So students should be interested to pick out and examine, in some detail, the material component in a nation's, or the world's, history.

Merely as background to the news of current concerns, some descriptive information about the institutional structures we live in can give depth and solidity to the anticipations of the future from minds which have memories longer than a student's own lifetime. A mind furnished with some stories, even some theories, and some well-corroborated facts about earlier decades or even centuries will move more easily through the news. Its life experience will gain a certain richness and perspective against a picture of the fluctuations, the drift, and the occasional sudden surprises through which the world, the "West," and, with it, the United States of America, has lived out its history. In one form or another, that history—its incessant change, fluctuations around temporary norms, and the great glacial drift of social evolution of those forms and norms—is sure to continue over the lifetime of those who today are young.

In a high school and college education, the study of history and economics, taken in conjunction with one another can and should be mutually reinforcing. They train the mind in different and complementary directions, the one toward exact definition and analysis, the other toward the broader, intuitive synthesis. Both are indispensable parts of the mental equipment for a generation which must find its way through a world that appears to its elders to be rapidly growing more volatile and complex.

William N. Parker is a professor of economics emeritus at Yale University.

CIVITAS *is a promising new social studies resource published by the Center for Civic Education and Council for the Advancement of Citizenship. It includes a 15-page content summary of economics, linking it directly to citizenship education. The following excerpt conveys the overall intelligence of the model and course guide:*

Economics can trace its lineage to Aristotle, who coined the term when referring to managing household resources—almost the modern definition of home economics. The modern founding of economics as a discipline is generally considered to center on the publication of Adam Smith's *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* in 1776. In a little over two centuries since that renowned treatise appeared, economists have defined their area of study and forged the tools of analysis that help to provide important insights into the contemporary world.

Economists generally agree that economics is the discipline that focuses on how people use scarce resources to satisfy their wants. In the words of [noted economist] James Duesenberry, "Economics is all about how people make choices." These choices can be divided into micro- and macroeconomics. Microeconomics focuses on the allocation of resources by individual units within the economy. These scarcity-based decisions help determine prices, production, and the distribution of income; whereas macroeconomics studies the levels and trends in measures of national output, employment, and prices, with an eye toward such long term issues as full employment and economic growth.

Political choices that confront citizens are replete with the ideas—and choices—of economics. Citizens can scarcely make sense of policies advocated in print and on the airwaves by those within and outside of political institutions unless they have a basic grounding in economic ideas and issues. Economics may have been dubbed "the dismal science;" but ignorance of economics on the part of citizens called upon to judge the ideas, criticisms, warnings, policies, and proposals that swirl about them in public debate is more dismal by far.

THE MULTICULTURE WATCH

This autumn, multiculturalism focuses on the symbol of Christopher Columbus. For a few, he embodies the first European devil, the intruder upon the Eden that was, harbinger of Euro-American savagery extending to the present. Other views are less critical. As reported in the *Social Studies Review* last spring, this event has spawned declarations, articles, books, and television series. The National Council for the Social Studies has debated the event during the last year. The final statement, released in October, is consciously revisionist, even chic. These are its seven key points verbatim:

> *1. Columbus did not discover a new world and, thus, initiate American history.*
> *2. The real America Columbus encountered in 1492 was a different place from the precontact America often portrayed in folklore, textbooks, and the mass media.*
> *3. Africa was very much a part of the social, economic, and political system of the Eastern Hemisphere in 1492.*
> *4. The encounters of Native Americans, Africans, and Europeans following 1492 are not stories of vigorous white actors confronting passive red and black spectators and victims.*
> *5. As a result of forces emanating from 1492, Native Americans suffered catastrophic mortality rates.*
> *6. Columbus's voyages were not just a European phenomenon but, rather, were a facet of Europe's millennia-long history of interaction with Asia and Africa.*
> *7. Although most examinations of the United States historical connections to the Eastern Hemisphere tend to focus on northwestern Europe, Spain and Portugal also had extensive effects on the Americas.*

There could have been more, much more, and it is disconcerting that the American Historical Association and Association for Supervision and Curriculum, with the National Education Association, signed this one-sided but inevitably influential statement.

The contact between Spain and the Americas in 1492 is the most important historical event of the past 500 years. Much has been made of a European invasion that brought disease and decimation to native tribes in the Americas. The brutality of the conquistadores is well known; the tragic consequences of the Columbian discovery for indigenous cultures are recorded in all major American history textbooks.

The Europeans also brought a sensibility—shaped throughout the Renaissance and Enlightenment—to provide the base of politics, economics, science, and culture in the Americas today. American agriculture and architecture derive from Europe, as do systems of health, sanitation, and communication. Democracy is a European export. Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries made Christianity the dominant faith in the Western Hemisphere. Spanish, Portuguese, English, and French are the languages of the Americas. In essence, Columbus's arrival on San Salvador was the herald of One World—the global network that, 500 years later, is taken for granted around the earth.

NOTED WITH INTEREST

★ South Carolina recently completed a statewide adoption to select five high school American history textbooks. South Carolina is a relatively small market, compared to some other states, but the adoption is truly selective. In other words, the state reviews many books and selects some. It does not give rubber stamp approval to all texts submitted. Many of the books competing in the state with 1992 copyrights are making their first appearance from the presses. Macmillan/McGraw-Hill submitted two such books, *American Odyssey* and *History of a Free Nation*. Neither was adopted. Globe's mediocre *Exploring American History* was also rejected. Surprisingly, so were Prentice Hall's prominent *The American Nation* and *The United States: A History of the Republic*. The following books were approved: *The American Pageant*, long used in advanced courses; *The Story of America*, adopted last year in California for eighth grade use but finding its niche in high schools; Houghton Mifflin's 1991 *History of the United States;* McDougal, Littell's *The Americans;* and Scott Foresman's new *American Voices*. Another generation of high school American history textbooks is apparently coming on line.

★ The use of children's books in the classroom continues to grow. *Publishers Weekly* reports from an American Association of Publishers survey of more than 5,000 elementary school principals that trade books are used in 97 percent of reading and language arts programs. Fifteen percent of schools use children's books in the social studies curriculum. More than half of the principals surveyed encourage teachers to use trade books in conjunction with reading texts; an additional 10 percent encourage teachers to use children's books instead of traditional textbooks to teach reading and language arts. Almost 70 percent of the principals encourage teachers to select the titles they wish to use, rather than requiring them to choose from a list.

★ Democratic revolutions have ended decades of Soviet domination and communist dictatorship in Eastern Europe. Now what is to be used in American history, world history, regional studies, and current affairs courses? For teachers puzzled about the omissions in textbook coverage of Eastern Europe, the Education for Democracy Project under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers has produced some excellent short resource packages on Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Romania. Each is designed to be used in a two-week unit, filling a gap in standard texts. Each package of about 50 pages includes facts, essays, and articles as well as classroom questions and activities. Forthcoming are similar packages on South Africa and Chile.

★ Also in the world of global studies: The American Institute for Contemporary German Studies at Johns Hopkins University has completed a lengthy analysis of how Germany is treated in U.S. social studies textbooks. Richard E. Gross of Stanford University has issued through the Hoover Institution a textbook study entitled "What Chinese Children and Youth are Learning About the United States." Texts in China remain true to Marxism and are highly critical of the U.S. Abraham Lincoln appears as a "progressive capitalist revolutionary." According to *The New York Times*, Japanese textbooks make little or no mention of the event of Pearl Harbor. Texts deal with the unpleasant past by trying to erase it, according to some Japanese intellectuals. Or courses simply stop in 1941. "The tendency of Japanese to see themselves as the victims, rather than the perpetrators, of war is especially apparent in popular culture," the *Times* reported.

★ *The New York Times* also recently considered the changing world of college textbooks. The tendencies in school markets are mirrored in college texts. "We don't publish textbooks anymore, we publish packages complete with all the bells and whistles," said Donald S. Lamm, the respected president of W.W. Norton. "You can have a beautifully written textbook but unless it has a lot of gadgetry you may find it placing third or fourth in the field." Publishers believe that freshmen and sophomores raised on hot video media "need textbooks that are 'reader friendly'—with wide margins, color photographs, overflowing with charts and graphs and with examples and anecdotal material set off the page in boxes." They liken the practice to "the Detroit mentality of planned obsolescence—the notion that because we put more chrome on an automobile, or more graphics in a textbook, the product is better."

★ The controversial Houghton Mifflin textbook series adopted in California last year appears to be selling briskly, and textbook revenues at Houghton Mifflin are strong. Meanwhile, the Boston-based publisher has just published a Spanish edition of its elementary social studies series. While many California educators have grave reservations about the use of official non-English texts in elementary schools, *Estudios Sociales de Houghton Mifflin* responds to the reality of California classrooms from El Centro to Red Bluff. In such locales Spanish-speaking students may comprise a majority of students. The books could find an audience as well in states from Arizona to Florida.

★ A 371-page catalog produced by the Social Studies School Service offers an extraordinary bazaar of available educational and instructional materials—textbooks, tradebooks, workbooks, videocassettes, sound filmstrips, transparencies, photo aids, multimedia kits, computer software, maps, charts, posters, simulations, reproducible activities, board games, model-building sets, cartoons, encyclopedic dictionaries, and other miscellaneous

materials on every conceivable subject of social studies. No effort is made at quality control; the service seems to be a warehouse of educational materials with something for everybody. Such a catalog may be ordered from the Social Studies School Service, Box 802, Culver City, California 90232.

★ With this issue Paul Gagnon leaves the American Textbook Council's advisory board to serve in the U.S. Department of Education. In his place comes Reed Ueda, a professor of history at Tufts University, and with Nathan Glazer, the author of the acclaimed 1983 study, *Ethnic Groups in History Textbooks*. And finally, we are pleased to announce a generous grant from the Richard Lounsbery Foundation for support of the *Social Studies Review* that will also enable the Council to launch a study of religion in textbooks and educational materials next year.

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SOCIAL STUDIES REVIEW

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A BULLETIN OF THE AMERICAN TEXTBOOK COUNCIL

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TEXTBOOKS TODAY: HOW SENSITIVE? HOW ACCURATE?

During the early months of 1992, the issue of women's history and the adequacy of the social studies curriculum for girls reasserted itself, ignited by a review sponsored by the American Association of University Women, highly critical of textbook content. An investigation by the American Textbook Council featured in this issue discovers a very different reality, one that indicates much progress in this area and many biases in the AAUW review.

One of the most significant changes in textbooks is in the field of women's history, in part because of widening interest in social history during the last decade. Publishers and textbook editors—often committed feminists themselves—have made extreme efforts to present and magnify the role of women in the past and to provide positive images of them. Thus, it is ironic or sad that these advances are being ignored by some influential women.

Meanwhile, in Texas, a botched 1991 adoption of U.S. history textbooks raises the issue of textbook accuracy, not of interpretation but of fact. The *Social Studies Review* tries to explain what happened, avoiding some of the recriminations that have recently turned the issue into a minor media event. Into the 1990s we go. We are now starting to encounter social studies textbooks developed by publishers since the late 1980s in response to the reports and recommendations of textbook critics. These new textbooks bear 1991 and 1992 copyrights.

The textbooks reviewed in this issue include several mass-market U.S. history texts introduced for eighth and eleventh grade use during

INSIDE

Page 3...Do Textbooks Shortchange Girls?

A provocative review makes some doubtful claims about women's history and textbook coverage. We look at the issue *and* at the books.

Page 9...Texas: A Shootout over Accuracy

The 1991 Texas adoption of U.S. history textbooks raises questions about factual accuracy and editing. With adoptions in South Carolina and Georgia, it also introduces a new generation of high school books. What are the emergent market trends in the social studies?

Page 13.....Toward A Definition of Multiculturalism

How does one balance commonality and diversity? Multiculture and Euroculture? Multiculturalism now means different things to different people.

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the last two years in California and Texas. These secondary-level texts—and in most high schools U.S. history is the linchpin of the social studies program—follow upon the elementary series that Macmillan and Houghton Mifflin brought out at the end of the 1980s. While we cannot conduct detailed full-scale reviews of each new book, we do at least open the curtain with our study of women's history and analysis of the recent U.S. history adoption in Texas.

A number of trends in social studies publishing are now manifest. During the last five years textbook and curriculum experts have watched shifting demands for subject matter (multiculturalism) and industry changes (consolidation and globalization) make social studies and school publishing a new game. The actual number of mass-market social studies textbooks has been gradually diminishing. Some publishers are concluding that it is no longer economic to develop and sell "one-size-fits-all" products. Educators more than ever insist on radically different themes and interpretations in their history books. Increasingly, the position of mass-market textbook producers seems threatened, and among the headaches are the controversies over subject matter that attend social studies texts. The risk and acrimony that now attend textbook marketing in the social studies curriculum will likely stimulate continued departure by publishers unable to abide their fractious and divided clientele.

It is confirmed that D.C. Heath, a division of Raytheon, is in large part abandoning the social studies market rather than develop a new elementary program and high school books. Bailey's *American Pageant* will presumably stay on the list. (While widely used at the high school level, mainly in Advanced Placement courses, it is a college book.) Heath will likely continue to offer titles in geography and economics.

The industry is witnessing some decisive strategic moves by communications companies who think of texbooks as global commodities. In just three years, the Macmillan/McGraw-Hill venture—which included the ingestion of Merrill—and the distressed condition of Harcourt Brace Jovanovich/Holt, Rinehart and Winston—now a distressed part of General Cinema, owners of Neiman Marcus and many movie theaters—has been matched by Time Warner's exit from the market with Scott Foresman's sale to HarperCollins.

The evident movement away from mass-market history textbooks surely creates opportunities for niche textbooks that seek particular audience. The trend may benefit publishers who produce supplementary and specialized products, including collections of stories, biographies, documents, and other non-traditional source materials. CD-ROMs and video formats will undoubtedly continue to make inroads as teaching devices.

With the spring 1992 *Social Studies Review*, we are once again inviting our 4,000 readers to subscribe or resubscribe to the bulletin. For the last three years foundation grants have enabled us to mail issues to the nation's leading educators, publishers, policy experts, and others who have a stake in high-quality social studies and humanities textbooks. We have thus been able to provide timely reviews of social studies texts and monitor the discourse on controversial areas of the curriculum.

While we are grateful for the support of many hundreds of readers who have sent contributions, the *Review* needs help to meet its ever rising printing and distribution costs, especially since it has expanded its size and volume. Private donations and contributions to the Council are always welcome, for they help ensure the ability of the *Review* to reach more educators who seek direction and information on social studies textbooks and the curriculum.

We thank the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation for its continued support. We are deeply indebted to the William H. Donner Foundation for a major grant this spring that will enable the Council to develop and publish a guide to textbook quality in history and the humanities, to appear in 1993. The handbook will provide the first comprehensive and independent standard of review for individuals and textbook selection committees in matters of format, style, and content. We at the Council are under the impression that such a guide is long overdue—and from the stream of telephone calls requesting such a standard—sorely needed by educators around the country.

DO TEXTBOOKS SHORTCHANGE GIRLS?

In February, the American Association of University Women released with great fanfare a review of research called "How Schools Shortchange Girls." The review—a recycled compilation of academic studies and feminist literature—immediately gained wide and uncritical attention in the major media. Once again, the review raises important questions of textbook treatment, balance, representation, point of view, and sensitivity, this time, regarding women in history.

As the title of the putative study suggests, the AAUW finds much wrong with schools: sex discrimination and stereotyping, inadequate teacher training in gender issues and learning styles, the absence of "gender-fair," multicultural curricula that avoid sex stereotypes, and more. The review found that "textbooks still ignore or stereotype women, and girls learn almost nothing about many of their most pressing problems, like sexual abuse, discrimination and depression," in the formulation of *The New York Times*.

This was indeed an astonishing set of charges to read about on the front page of the national paper of record. The first point was simply not true. The second gave the mistaken impression that textbooks should be mainly concerned with "pressing problems, like sexual abuse."

The AAUW review advocates solidarity in curriculum reform, adhering to the principles of militant multiculturalism. It praises the efforts of New York state education commissioner Thomas Sobol and tries to build an explicit alliance between multiculturalism, feminist-style school reform, and the plight of the "culturally different."

"How Schools Shortchange Girls" would give the idea to many people who don't know education or the contemporary curriculum very well that girls are getting a raw deal from textbooks and teachers. But the review bends reality in order to pretend, after twenty years, women and girls remain victims of education. It ignores the vast progress and the degree of inclusion that has occurred in textbooks. "How Schools Shortchange Girls" is either ignorant of today's curriculum or—more alarming, perhaps—unaware of the hypothetical biases through which it views education.

First, any critic or scholar during the last ten years who has actually compared the place of women in schoolbooks today to the texts of the past will discover greatly expanded coverage and profound changes in content, interpretation, and language. In the 1970s women's history became an academic growth industry. Before the end of the decade, the contributions of women had entered the textbooks, at first added crudely in sidebars and boxes. This has changed over the years. In the better textbooks now, women's history (and literature) is woven into the fuller skein of the unit or lesson.

Nowadays, students are more likely to encounter Anne Hutchinson than Cotton Mather. They study the Seneca Falls Resolution instead of the Bank Wars. In wartime they meet Clara Barton and Rosie the Riveter instead of blood-and-guts sea captains, all to the enrichment of the American record. No better evidence of the expanded coverage and broader treatment exists than in textbook indexes themselves. A standard entry (see box on page 7) for Women is considerably longer than the index for World War I and World War II combined. In the W's alone, Ethel Waters, Emma Willard, Narcissa Whitman, Sarah Winnemucca, Edith Wharton, and Alice Walker have all made the scene. Textbooks today make every effort to treat women with sensitivity, to point out historical discrimination, to pay close attention to success stories and depict women in activities that are not "traditional" or stereotypical.

Feminists might argue, as in the AAUW review, "Research on high school social studies texts reveals that while women are more often included, they are likely to be the usual 'famous women,' or women in protest movements. Rarely is there dual and balanced treatment of women and men, and seldom are women's perspectives and cultures presented on their own terms."

But what's the alternative? What would be required for history to achieve "dual and balanced treatment of women and men"? What exactly does "women's perspectives and cultures presented on their own terms" mean?

The argument that half the world's population, in the past, as in the present, have been women is not enough. In politics and economics, which encase us all, men have until very recently played an almost exclusive leadership role.

Some social historians, of course, would like to reconstitute history so that the past would be seen, for example, not through the actions of Julius Caesar or George Washington, but through the experiences of a Nubian slave or Algonquin squaw. Say the advocates of the new social history, such an angle of vision is not only valid, but an improvement on the elitist and patriarchal history of the past.

Aside from this interesting historiographic debate, in the Winter 1992 issue of *Academic Questions* Robert Lerner, Althea K. Nagai, and Stanley Rothman take up the issue of feminist influence on textbooks and come to a set of conclusions very different from the AAUW review. This group of Smith College-based textbook analysts has argued in a number of published studies that a feminist agenda pervades textbook revision in the social studies. Lerner et al. assert:

> *There is one major problem, however, in writing nonsexist history textbooks. Most of America's history is male dominated, in part because in most states women were not allowed to vote in federal elections or hold office until the twentieth century. This may be regrettable, but it is still a fact. What then is the nonsexist writer of the American history textbook to do? The answer is filler feminism—accentuating the importance of minor characters and events without eliminating coverage of major persons and events from standard American history. This expansion allows the textbook writers to accomplish several goals:*
>
> - *creatively incorporate more women in such traditionally male-dominated arenas as wars, business, science, and technology.*
> - *highlight the contemporary feminist movement and the Equal Rights Amendment (even though it did not pass) in a positive manner.*
> - *remind the reader that women were and still are systematically discriminated against in American society.*

It can be argued that Lerner et al. overestimate the impact of feminism on textbook content at the expense of other revisionist efforts. Still, if the researchers are to be believed even in part, how then could the AAUW review come to the conclusions it did? Very simple. It stacked the deck. A number of recent studies that indicate the success of feminists and other advocates of curricular diversity in textbook and subject development—nowhere more thoroughly than in social studies—are ignored. The AAUW curriculum review is based largely on outdated studies, many of them obscure and others politically transparent.

In textbooks today, a standard index entry for Women is considerably longer than the index for World War I and World War II combined.

"How Schools Shortchange Girls" hauls out a 1971 study entitled "Women in U.S. History Textbooks" and the old—presciently entitled—polemic, *Dick and Jane As Victims: Sex Stereotyping in Children's Readers* (1975). The critique of textbooks relies on "research" from the defunct Council on Interracial Books for Children and a journal called *Feminist Teacher*. The preposterous charge that "even texts designed to fit within the current California guidelines on gender and race equity for textbook adoption showed subtle language bias, neglect of scholarship on women, omission of women as developers of history and initiators of events, and absence of women from accounts of technological developments" derives from a recent newsletter of the special interest group on gender and social justice at the National Council for the Social Studies.

The findings seem painstakingly designed to collect selected sources to demonstrate a preordained thesis of institutional sexism and curricular deficit. Moreover, the curriculum—and as should be understood, the textbook is the premier determinant and standard of curriculum, providing an estimated 75 to 90 percent of courses of study—should not be confused with a program of therapy. Textbooks are conceived to convey grammar and spelling, numeracy, the foundations of democratic civilization, and more. They are designed to instruct, not act as remedies for human and social failings.

It is unfortunate that the AAUW officers and the hired team of scholar-activists at Wellesley College who conducted the review failed to look at the evidence, that is, at the very textbooks that they criticize. The review speaks of an "evaded curriculum" of "matters central to the lives of students...including the functioning of bodies, the expression and valuing of feelings, and the dynamics of power." If they had looked, the researchers would even have found a genre of books that stress personal concerns, that are therapeutic in nature, that do focus on themes such as adolescent depression, sexuality, teenage pregnancy, peer pressure, drugs, divorce, sexism, racism, and the other grim baggage of contemporary life adjustment. Health books like *Growing Up Caring* (Glencoe, 1990), reviewed in the Summer 1991 issue of the *Social Studies Review*, often replace history in social studies courses. These books try to give tips on coping with everyday difficulties and personal problems.

Some new kind of non-academic curriculum is what the authors of "How Schools Shortchange Girls" seem determined to promote, and not only for schoolchildren. Teachers are to be educated or reeducated. "A 1980 analysis of the twenty-four most widely used teacher education textbooks found that less than 1 percent of the space in the texts was devoted to the problems of sexism. The authors of the study concluded that teacher education was reinforcing sex bias rather than reducing it," notes the review with great alarm. But twelve years later, teacher education textbooks in fact brim with these kinds of "problems," arguably at the expense of pedagogy and other instructional content.

Textbooks for students are not obligated to do certain things. They cannot be expected to cure complicated social problems or psychological maladies. They cannot satisfactorily substitute accomplished role models that are absent in real life. Certainly, girls (and boys) like studying about women of strength and character, women who had a compass on the world and who made something of their lives—a Chumash girl, the women who traveled to California across Panama during the Gold Rush, Jane Addams, or Ella Fitzgerald. While enriching history, however, such content is not enough. At a certain point, social history must cede to the record of political and economic origins. Otherwise, it withholds the epic story of how the nation and the world became what they are today. It averts the crucial and unending question, by what means does a commonwealth organize itself in the realms of governance and production.

Since 1970, feminists have expanded awareness of women's history and sexism so that today's textbooks are subjected to constant scrutiny and demands for inclusion. In response to their complaints, publishers have made strides in coverage. Surely women are treated "positively" and "sensitively." But overloaded social studies textbooks have become a zero-sum enterprise. What is added will replace something taken out. Textbooks cannot grow much larger. It must be remembered, in the push for representation, some old material must go. Adaptations can go only so far until they marginalize the prevailing figures in the nation's and world's history and substitute for them new symbolic individuals.

What follows is the "male/female roles" section of the two-page summary of legal compliance requirements for all textbooks submitted for adoption published in 1987 by the state of California. Instructional material must meet specific criteria on gender and in several other areas (e.g., ethnicity, age, disability, religion, brand names, environment, diet and exercise, humane treatment of animals) before they can be further considered for classroom use.

1. No demeaning labels or role stereotyping
2. Equal illustrations of male/female figures
3. Equal portrayal in occupations and range of career opportunities
4. Equal representation of male/female contributions and achievements
5. Equal representation of males/females in mental and physical activities
6. Balance of traditional and non-traditional roles
7. Equal representation of similar emotions in males/females (fear, aggression, tenderness, etc.)
8. Neutral language (i.e., people, persons, men and women, they)
9. Both sexes portrayed in parenting activities with families

WHAT DOES THE AAUW REVIEW CHARGE?

An excerpt from the section in "How Schools Shortchange Girls" that makes the case against the formal school curriculum, vested in textbooks:

In 138 articles on educational reform that appeared in nine prominent educational journals between 1983 and 1987, less than 1 percent of the text addressed sex equity. Only one article discussed curriculum and instruction as they relate to sex equity. A 1990 survey commissioned by the National Education Association revealed that even among programs sponsored by organizations and institutions concerned with equity in education, only three national professional development programs for teachers focused on gender and race in English and social studies curriculum content.

Since the early 1970s, many studies have surveyed instructional materials for sex bias. Published in 1975, *Dick and Jane As Victims: Sex Stereotyping in Children's Readers* set a pattern for line-by-line examination of the messages about girls and boys delivered by texts, examples, illustrations, and thematic organization in everything from basal readers to science textbooks. In 1971 a study of thirteen popular U.S. history textbooks revealed that material on women comprised no more than 1 percent of any text, and that women's lives were trivialized, distorted, or omitted altogether. Studies from the late 1980s reveal that although sexism has decreased in some elementary school texts and basal readers, the problems persist, especially at the secondary school level, in terms of what is considered important enough to study.

A 1989 study of book-length works taught in high school English courses reports that, in a national sample of public, independent, and Catholic schools, the ten books assigned most frequently included only one written by a woman and none by members of minority groups. This research, which used studies from 1963 and 1907 as a base line, concludes that "the lists of most frequently required books and authors are dominated by white males, with little change in overall balance from similar lists 25 or 80 years ago."

During the late 1970s and '80s, experiments with more inclusive school curricula were aided by the rapid development of scholarly work and courses in black studies, ethnic studies, and women's studies in colleges and universities. Publications of the Council on Interracial Books for Children (founded in 1966), The Feminist Press (founded in 1970), and the federally funded Women's Educational Equity Program (started in 1974) inspired many teachers to develop more inclusive reading lists and assignments that draw on student's lives.

What effects did the revised curricula have on students? A 1980 review of research on how books influence children cited twenty-three studies that demonstrated that books do transmit values to young readers, that multicultural reading produces markedly more favorable attitudes toward nondominant groups than do all-white curricula, that academic achievement for all students was positively correlated with use of nonsexist and multicultural curriculum materials, and that sex-role stereotyping was reduced in those students whose curriculum portrayed females and males in nonstereotypical roles.

During the 1980s, federal support for research and action on sex equity and race equity dropped sharply. But many individual teachers, librarians, authors, and local or state school authorities continued a variety of efforts to lessen stereotyping and omissions, or expand and democratize the curriculum.

Virtually all textbook publishers now have guidelines for nonsexist language. Unfortunately, not all insist that authors follow them. Change in textbooks is observable but not striking. Research on high school social studies texts reveals that while women are more often included, they are likely to be the usual "famous women," or women in protest movements. Rarely is there dual and balanced treatment of women and men, and seldom are women's perspectives and cultures presented on their own terms.

Researchers at a 1990 conference reported that even texts designed to fit within the current California guidelines on gender and race equity for textbook adoption showed subtle language bias, neglect of scholarship on

women, omission of women as developers of history and initiators of events, and absence of women from accounts of technological developments. An informal survey of twenty U.S. history textbooks compiled each year from 1984 to 1989 found a gradual but steady shift away from an overwhelming emphasis on laws, wars, and control over territory and public policy, toward an emphasis on people's daily lives in many kinds of circumstances. [It is unclear at this point in the review why it fails to acknowledge that "an emphasis on people's daily lives" has done much to demarginalize women and thus identify new content as evidence of progressive forces in historiography]....

The most important impediment to gender-fair and multicultural curricula may be inherited views of what education is and whom it should serve. For example, when it became clear [sic] that New York's schools were not serving the population well, New York Commissioner of Education Thomas Sobol created a committee for the review and development of Social Studies curricula in the schools. The committee's report is a clear commitment to curricular principles of democracy, diversity, economic and social justice, globalism, ecological balance, ethics and values, and the individual and society. It recommends that curriculum and teaching methods be more inclusive and respectful of diversity. The report has created a furor in the New York media, reflecting the larger debate going on throughout the country. Critics have called Ethnic Studies and Women's Studies "political," as if a curriculum that leaves women out altogether is not also "political." Multicultural work has been termed "divisive" without recognizing that an excessively white male curriculum is divisive when it ignores the contributions others make to society. Critics who insist that students must focus on our "common heritage" appear to overlook the experiences of Native Americans as well as the immigrant history of the rest of the population which makes diversity one of the key elements of the "common" heritage of the United States.

In a democracy, schools must address the educational needs of all students. Each student should find herself or himself reflected in the curriculum. When this happens, students learn and grow.

These are the index entries for Women in two new high school U.S. histories that bring a "social history" approach to the nation's past and present.

Berkin et al., *American Voices*. (Scott Foresman, 1992)

Women, and affirmative action; and Age of Reform; in American Colonies; in armed forces; and Civil Rights Act of 1964; in Civil War; Constitutional rights of; education for; Equal Rights Amendment (ERA); and European exploration; in Gilded Age; National Organization for Women (NOW); National Women's Party; in professions, to 1900; in professions, after 1900; property rights of; New Deal and; in 1920s; in 1930s; in 1950s; in 1960s; in Progressive Era; and Seneca Falls Convention; in single-parent families; on Supreme Court; voting rights of, 1850-1900; voting rights of, 1900-1920; women's movement in the 1960s; and World War I; and World War II
IN THE LABOR FORCE, early 1800s; during Civil War; from 1860 to 1900; the 1920s; from 1929 to 1940; in the Progressive Era; in World War I; in World War II through 1960s; as working wives (1960 - 1969); after 1970. *See also* Labor force; Labor unions
AND MARRIAGE, 1850 - 1900; 1900-1958; 1958 to present
TRADITIONAL ROLES FOR, views on: 1850 - 1920; 1920 - 1960; since 1960; as working wives (1960 - 1969. *See also* Abortion; African Americans, women; Birth control; male-dominated societies; Matrilineal societies; Pro-choice movement; Pro-life movement
Women and Economics
Women's Army Corps (WAC)
Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron (WAFS)
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)
Women's Political Council
Women's Reserve (Marine Corps)
Women's Suffrage

Nash, *American Odyssey*. (Glencoe, 1992)

Women, in abolition movement; in American colonies; in American Revolution; in Civil War; discrimination of; economic rights of; and equal opportunity; in Great Depression; in labor movement; in 1960s; in 1970s; in 1980s; political rights of; in progressive movement; reproductive rights of; and social and gender relationships; and suburban lifestyle; voting rights for; in work force; in World War I; in World War II
Women's Campaign Fund
Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU)
Women's Council of Defense
Women's Joint Congressional Committee
Women's movement, Congressional responses to; legal responses to; in 1920s; organizations in; origins of; role of Eleanor Roosevelt in
Women's study courses
Women's Trade Union
Women's Trade Union League
Women strike for peace
Women (by Alice Walker)

WHAT DO THE TEXTBOOKS SAY?

The following are representative passages from recent and new U.S. history textbooks that cover the events and meaning of feminism and the women's movement from the 1960s. In an "older" text, Todd and Curti's Triumph of the American Nation, *a leader in eleventh grade history in the 1980s, for example, one notices an unintentionally condescending cheerleading style and wooden lists of "significant" women, an additive approach much criticized during the last few years. In the newer books, one encounters discrimination and women's travail described more directly.* Nash's American Odyssey *considers race in the context of gender. In the passage from Berkin et al.,'s* American Voices, *a line of thinking close to partisan feminism indicates the extent of revisionism in some current mass-market schoolbooks.*

Todd and Curti, Triumph of the American Nation. *(Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990)*

Women also entered careers in fields formerly dominated by men. Women enlisted in the armed forces in growing numbers. Women became police officers and ministers. Sally Ride became the first female astronaut, and Kathryn Sullivan was the first woman to walk in space. Women won new recognition in such sports as tennis and golf. Dress and social customs were less strictly categorized as masculine and feminine.

The question of abortion became a major issue in the 1984 Presidential race. Ronald Reagan firmly opposed abortion and backed a Constitutional ban on abortion. His opponent, Walter Mondale, felt that abortion was a personal and religious matter.

In political affairs women were still underrepresented. However, change was in the air.

Several women in Congress became nationally known. Among them were Bella Abzug, Shirley Chisholm, Barbara Jordan, Elizabeth Holtzman, and Nancy Kassebaum. With the start of the new congress in 1985 there were 24 women serving in Congress, 22 in the House of Representatives and 2 in the Senate.

Perhaps the most impressive gains for women in politics came at the state and local levels. In 1974 no women served as governors, 519 were state representatives, and 91 were state senators. Ten years later 816 women were representatives and 177 were senators. Martha Layne Collins of Kentucky and Madeleine Kunin of Vermont were the only women serving as governor. Also in 1984, 86 cities with populations greater than 30,000 had women as mayors. Dianne Feinstein of San Francisco was the most widely known.

Other women in government included Carla Hills, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development under President Ford. In 1980 President Carter appointed two women, Juanita Kreps and Patricia Harris, to his cabinet. President Reagan named Elizabeth Dole as Secretary of Transportation and Margaret Heckler as Secretary of Health and Human Services. He also chose Jeanne Kirkpatrick as United States Ambassador to the United Nations. (Shortly after Reagan's 1984 election Kirkpatrick announced that she would resign in 1985.) His most widely noted appointment, however, was that of Sandra Day O'Connor to a seat on the Supreme Court.

DiBacco et al., History of the United States. *(Houghton Mifflin, 1991)*

Working outside the home brought women more money but also new problems. Some of these were practical issues, such as finding and paying for child care. Other issues were philosophical. Was it harmful for children to have working mothers? And now that women were helping earn money, should men help with household chores?

Another problem was the nature of the jobs themselves. Many were in areas like secretarial work, which had long been viewed as the domain of women. These "pink collar" jobs as they came to be known, paid low wages and offered few chances for advancement. While they brought women into the work force, they were also often a dead end.

Even where women were able to enter new fields, they faced discrimination from men. During the 1970s, many "blue collar" jobs began to open to women. By the end of the decade, women worked on construction sites, installed and repaired telephones, drove buses, and did many other traditionally male jobs. Yet women in these jobs often reported that they had to work twice as hard to be accepted by their male colleagues.

Nash, American Odyssey. *(Glencoe, 1992)*

Minority women faced a special problem in that they encountered sexual and racial discrimination at the same time. They experienced sexual discrimination by men, both white and black; and they faced racial discrimination by whites, men, and other women. In describing that period, the author Toni Morrison explained how black women "look at white women and see the enemy, for they know that racism is not confined to white men and that there are more white women than men is this country."

Many African American, Hispanic American, Native American, and Asian American women chose to delay their fight for equality in one sphere while they struggled for recognition in the other. Because priorities needed to be established, many women chose to seek full civil liberties for their ethnic group as their first objective. Equality between men and women would have to come later.

Berkin et al., American Voices. *(Scott Foresman, 1992)*

Gender discrimination was deeply embedded in American life, so deeply that most men—and many women—were not even aware of how fundamentally it shaped their lives.

TEXAS: A SHOOTOUT OVER ACCURACY

During recent months, alarm about the accuracy of U. S. history textbooks has swept the nation. The uproar—and the events leading up to it—merit close attention, since the problems arose in the important 1991 Texas adoption. The situation not only raises questions of textual credibility but also indicates how much the roles of publishers, editors, and textbook authors have changed during the last decade.

In 1991, the state of Texas adopted new textbooks in United States history. This is the largest single adoption in social studies. The Texas call in U.S. history has long had inordinate national influence. As is customary with the approach of the Texas proclamation, which begins the process, major publishers produced new books with 1992 copyrights. These U.S. history textbooks will now compete nationally with market leaders from the 1980s and the U.S. history books unveiled first for the 1990 eighth grade adoption in California. Some of the newest books were cut editorially from whole cloth. Others were radically revised versions of established texts. Almost all were developed under contract by "packagers" outside publishing houses. (Editorial staffs in textbook houses have become mainly production overseers and sales people.)

Some new books were not submitted to Texas. Only one book from the old Texas list was resubmitted, a top-to-bottom renovation of Berkin et al., *Land of Promise* (Scott Foresman, 1987). Todd and Curti's *Triumph of the American Nation* (Harcourt Brace, 1990) and Boorstin and Kelley's *History of the United States* (Prentice Hall, 1990) did not enter the competition, for example. The number of books submitted in Texas state adoptions has been shrinking through the 1980s, as fewer publishers control the market. Just six books went through the 1991 screening process for U.S. history, four of them split into two volumes for use in both the eighth and eleventh grade, with two others designed solely for the high school level (see box).

All six books have great ambitions for the 1990s. They purport to be a "new generation" of U.S. history textbooks, far advanced in comparison to the much criticized U.S. history texts of the 1980s. Yet in their debut, a series of disasters and disappointments have blindsided publishers.

Anywhere from 5,000 to 20,000 uncorrected copies of the 1992 books were distributed around the U. S. to pilot programs or as samples. Garraty's *The Story of America* (Holt, Rinehart) and Divine et al.'s *America: The People and the Dream* (Scott Foresman) made their debut in the 1990 California social studies adoption. (The Garraty book was adopted for

eighth grade use in California; the Divine book was rejected.)

Then, into the Texas adoption came Mel and Norma Gabler, longstanding textbook critics who have complained for decades about "secular humanism," licentiousness, anti-patriotic themes, and trendiness in social studies texts. The avuncular Gablers—revered among Texas fundamentalists and ridiculed or feared by progressives—had lost their influence in Austin during the 1980s. Their arguments against textbook content seemed cranky and quaint, especially in light of the wave of opposition to textbooks coming not from Christian fundamentalists but from ethnic, feminist, and multicultural activists.

The Gablers run an organization called Educational Research Analysts from their home in Longview, Texas. They comb textbooks for biases against religion, free enterprise, nationalism and for values-clarification-type moral relativism. In this adoption, like others, their own reviewers hunted for factual errors in the submitted history texts, teacher's editions, and ancillary materials. The reason: to raise public awareness about textbook fallibility. Their strategy succeeded when they presented to the Texas Education Agency a list of 231 errors, most of them minor, a few of them unconscionable.

What follow are some errors in the books:

Q: "Was Truman's description of the Korean conflict as a "police action" a false image or an accurate image? Explain.
A: "It was accurate because the United States easily settled the conflict by using the bomb." (*American Voices*, Vol. 2, Scott Foresman, Teacher's Edition)

Q: What was Sputnik?
A: "the first successful intercontinental ballistic missile launched by the Soviet Union; carried a nuclear warhead" (*American Odyssey*, Glencoe, Teacher's Edition)

The Canal Zone is "the 50-mile-wide zone across the Isthmus of Panama along the Panama Canal..." [Correct: 10 miles] (*America: The People and the Dream*, Vol. 2, Scott Foresman)

"...the Union capture of Vicksburg, Tennessee, in the Civil War" [Correct: Vicksburg, Mississippi] (*History of the United States*, Vol. 2, Houghton Mifflin)

The initial mistakes were discovered last November, just as the Texas Education Agency was about to approve the books, expected to cost about $20 million this year. (By one estimate, Texas is expected to buy a total of $131 million in textbooks during 1992-93.) Under the new conditions of the adoption, the TEA required publishers to hire independent editors to search for more errors. How many errors were there? The figure rose quickly to a hard-to-believe 5,552. While acknowledging the gravity of the problem, however, it is important also not to sensationalize the extent of errors.

Some television reports tried to inflate the issue well beyond its real danger, giving the impression to the general public that textbooks were grossly inaccurate. (Errors of interpretation and imbalance are actually a far more serious problem than factual mistakes in history textbooks.) The overwhelming majority of the mistakes found in Texas involved

The most significant aspect of the 1991 Texas adoption in U.S. history was the small number of submissions, which publishers blamed on increasingly complicated state guidelines. Less publicized reasons included corporate consolidation, production and marketing costs, and inevitable content controversies over history books. The six books submitted to and adopted by Texas were, with asterisks used to denote the two-volume (eighth- and eleventh-grade two-in-one) books:

Berkin et al., *American Voices*. (Scott Foresman, 1992)
Davidson et al., *American Journey*. (Prentice Hall, 1992)*
DiBacco et al., *History of the United States*. (Houghton Mifflin, 1991)*
Divine et al., *America: The People and the Dream*. (Scott Foresman, 1991)*
Garraty, *The Story of America*. (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1991)*
Nash, *American Odyssey: The United States in the Twentieth Century*. (Glencoe, 1992)

READING TEA LEAVES

Everyone knows how difficult it is to extract candid information about textbooks from publishers, especially as to market success and adoption. But now, a number of new social studies series and books have come on line. The California adoption of 1990 is over. The 1991 Texas adoption of eighth and eleventh grade U.S. history textbooks is completed. It is thus possible to consider the reception of this "new generation" of texts.

Besides the Texas megadoption, the states of South Carolina and Georgia undertook high school U.S. history textbook adoptions in 1991. From many discussions with state officials and textbook representatives, the following gives some idea of early box office.

In California, Houghton Mifflin has spent two years fighting all kinds of dire charges by religious and ethnic extremists who don't feel that its elementary series went far enough in its explicit effort at multicultural infusion. Meanwhile, the less challenging—but to teachers who prefer the tried-and-true—more conventional Macmillan series has gained the national market. Competing editors claim that Houghton Mifflin is capturing only 10 percent of the market outside California because the books fall outside their scope and sequence mandates. The two series together have blown the inferior Silver Burdett elementary series—which during the 1980s achieved a reported 70 percent share in some states—out of the water.

The South Carolina adoption was the most selective in 1991. Fourteen books were submitted to the state, including most of the major U.S. histories developed and introduced during the last two years. Three of the six high school history books that South Carolina adopted were on the Texas list. They are: Berkin et al., *American Voices* (Scott Foresman); DiBacco et al., *History of the United States* (Houghton Mifflin); and Garraty, *The Story of America* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston).

Several other new books were rejected by South Carolina, including: Nash, *American Odyssey* (Glencoe), now competing for the California high school market and adopted in Texas. Glencoe must also be unhappy with the early reception to its splashy makeover of *History of a Free People* (1981), now entitled *History of a Free Nation* (1992) and supposedly written by Bradgon et al., also rejected by South Carolina. A full-scale revision of the long best-selling textbook, it is so much an overhaul that the original book and many of its simple virtues have been lost. The great history teacher Henry W. Bragdon had nothing to do with the text. He died in 1980. *History of a Free Nation* was not submitted to the Texas adoption, ostensibly because it did not match the Texas two-volume format.

South Carolina rejected three leading texts of the 1980s, Todd and Curti, *The Triumph of the American Nation* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich) and from Prentice Hall, Davidson et al., *The American Nation* and Boorstin and Kelley's well-regarded *A History of the United States.*

The success of *American Voices* quickly establishes it as a leader in the 1990s market. It indicates the wide interest in social history and revisionism. Divine et al., *America: The People and the Dream* (Scott Foresman) was also adopted in Texas. This easy reader, whose rejection by California in 1990 caused great disappointment for the publisher, also incorporates new themes, as does *The Story of America*—adopted by California for eighth graders—now finding an enthusiastic national audience in high schools.

The biggest reversal of 1992 seems to be the sudden decline of Todd and Curti, a leader in American history courses during the 1980s. It was not submitted to South Carolina or Texas. Georgia—far less selective than South Carolina—rejected it. State officials gave among the reasons what they called an "outdated approach, inattention to multiculturalism, inadequate critical thinking questions, and choppy narrative flow." According to a state commissioner: "The newer books are better." Is Boorstin and Kelley also a fading star? Houghton Mifflin seems to have moved aside Graff, *History of the Republic* in favor of *History of the United States*, a text recently adopted in South Carolina and Texas.

faulty indexes, chronologies, captions, and Q and A in teacher's guide correlations. Some advertised errors were in fact open to dispute. How many Americans, for example, died in World War I? About 53,000 died in battle. But 126,000 died altogether in the war, mainly of dreaded influenza and disease.

What the Texas debacle brings to light is the way in which textbooks are now produced. Social studies textbooks are developed by teams who have little or no experience in the subject, and who are far more agitated by problems of schedule, design, permission, and scope and sequence than of style or narrative. Quality control is missing. Editors roam the country, jangling the tambourines on behalf of their latest product in sales caravans and at educational conferences. The actual writers of textbooks are almost never the stated authors on the spine of the book. Such "names" are usually consultants, and the actual work is done by anonymous writers, too often of modest talent. Authorial control is almost nonexistent, and even scrupulous authors are sometimes surprised by changes in their material presented by editors fait accompli.

"Textbook publishers have virtually eliminated real authors," Michael Keedy of the Textbook Authors Association told *Publishers Weekly*. Keedy noted that successful textbooks can be very profitable. "Publishers look at those royalty accounts and see it as a place to squeeze," he said. "They hire development houses who create a line of books to the specifications of the publisher. But some of the people working on these books aren't qualified. So the whole process becomes writing by committee and fiat rather than knowledge and expertise."

Some authors just abdicate responsibility. "For me to read the book and check it for factual accuracy simply makes no sense," William Jay Jacobs, the author of *America's Story* (Houghton Mifflin), said to the *Wall Street Journal*, which first called national attention to the extent of the errors in a careful article.

Upon learning of the mistakes and upset by the publicity they were generating, the state of Texas suspended the adoption. It fined publishers $647,100, to be paid in free textbooks on a schedule of $200 per error before January 24, 1992 and $300 thereafter. More penalties may accrue. The TEA also required certifications of accuracy and revisions. Publishers have agreed to make all of the specified corrections, and in March, Texas gave approval to all of the books submitted.

Textbook publishers are mortified. There has been much memo writing and finger pointing in editors' towers from Glenview, Illinois to Austin, Texas. Some of them are claiming that multiple authorship and the use of development houses to create books do not necessarily result in more errors. Steven A. Dowling, the president of the Holt, Rinehart and Winston school division, cites more demanding state guidelines as the principal reason for the increase in errors. Dowling does admit that problems arose because most textbooks are written by groups of authors. "What happens is, you get different pieces of the book, and that's where you have opportunities for mistakes," Dowling noted.

Murray Giles, the editorial director for social studies and health at Glencoe, the high school imprint of Macmillan/McGraw-Hill, blamed time pressures. "We usually have less than two years from the proclamation date to produce a manuscript that routinely runs at least a thousand pages," Giles said in *Publishers Weekly*. "In that time we have to conduct market research, find an author, get the manuscript written and reviewed by experts, do the art work and photo-editing, and finally print the book."

It should be hoped that the Texas adoption teaches everyone in the industry a few lessons. Social studies texts will always have some minor errors. The process of creating a textbook is far more complex than a trade book. They are encyclopedic compilations of facts and dates. Their scope, detail, and complicated layout add to the problem. Still, textbooks need more rigorous review by specialists. While the Texas textbook controversy may not fundamentally change the way school books are developed, it might in the end produce social studies materials that are more carefully reviewed. "We need to do more editing," Holt, Rinehart's Dowling said. "Because of this, the books will probably get another layer of editing and fact-checking done on them."

TOWARD A DEFINITION OF MULTICULTURALISM

In 1990, when the multiculturalism controversy spread into the broad conversation of culture, the word "broke out" of the educational and intellectual community. The debate captured the attention of the broader public.

Two years later, what is most obvious and least examined about multiculturalism is (1) that it is taken to be a self-explanatory word in much political and educational discourse, and (2) that there are several or many different definitions of what it is. What is multiculturalism?

By now it is a word freighted by conflicting cultural and political assumptions. Multiculturalism refers to efforts to recognize and study the diverse ethnic backgrounds and personal differences among Americans, to "promote respect for people of different backgrounds and races."Almost all educators now agree that some program of multicultural education—mainly but not exclusively in history and humanities—should bring into high relief the multiethnic and multiracial nature of American society and the planet, thus extending curricula beyond the "Eurocentric." But beyond this vague premise, multiculturalism means different things to different people.

Many multicultural enthusiasts hold that the school-based imposition of Western history, literature, ideas, institutions, and values on children—at least of non-European backgrounds—is unjust and culturally biased. The American educational system is institutionally racist, ethnocentric, and patriarchal, it is said by a vocal few. The accomplishments of nonwhites, women, homosexuals, the disabled, and the "culturally different" are falsified, marginalized, and caricatured in order to perpetuate the "hegemony" of the Western patriarchy. Without multicultural reform, it is also said, non-white children will lose "self-esteem" and underachieve educationally. The elements of oppression and victimization may dominate the theme, whereby the humanities and social sciences become a curriculum of anger, resentment, and complaint. Accordingly, some multiculturalists seek to make children aware of Euroculture's innate rapacity and thus promote "social consciousness." This kind of multiculturalism then moves distinctly toward political action, redress, or retaliation.

Feeling good about oneself has become a national elixir, extending into all quarters of the culture, and it is not surprising that some educators should seek curricular enhancements in order to promote universal sentiments of self-worth and combat feelings of inferiority. Moving beyond multiculturalism, David Rieff declared recently in Harper's *magazine:*

> That the recovery psychotherapists are more radical than the academic multiculturalists becomes most clear when one examines the politics of victimhood, a centerpiece of both movements. [Multiculturalism] is inherently self-limiting in the sense that if the concept of oppression is to make any kind of sense, the situation of the various groups of victims—be they blacks, Hispanics, women, or gays—must be opposed to that of the oppressor group—these days straight white males. Proponents of recovery do not think in group terms. They claim that virtually everyone in the country is, in some essential sense, a victim—a victim, mostly, of abusive parents.

Since discourse is conducted under the opaque film of "sensitivity," core arguments, subtexts, and ultimate aims are sometimes hard to parse. Still, multiculturalism may acknowledge qualities of American culture and politics that transcend individual and group differences, or it may contend that the racial, sexual, and religious differences among Americans are so vast as to be unbridgeable. Furthermore, it may assert that these differences create "separate realities" and "multiple perspectives" that make a universal—especially a Eurocentric—curriculum a travesty, and it may call on the nation to replace the ideal of assimilation—which was, after all, nothing more than illusion or opium—to embrace "pluralism," which may not be pluralism at

all. Or it may be a call for increased recognition of the nation's increasing ethnic and cultural diversity that assumes (or hopes for) relative comity among American citizens of all economic levels. It remains to be seen the degree of Eurocentrism and extent of commonality that the multicultural idea will tolerate in the 1990s. The scholarly debate continues.

What is the "Eurocentric" view? First, some background, with many debts to the legendary text, R. R. Palmer, *A History of the Modern World* (1950):

In the nineteenth century Europeans possessed ocean liners, railroads, and street cars, and after about 1880, telephones and electric lights. They had hospitals and orphanages. All this seemed evidence of advancement and progress, even inspired a sense of human superiority. But the European ideal of civilization was not exclusively materialistic. Correct or truthful knowledge was held to be a civilized attainment—scientific knowledge of nature, in place of superstition or demonology; geographical knowledge, by which civilized people were aware of the earth as a whole with its general contours and diverse inhabitants. Before 1914, Europeans—and their adjuncts, the Euro-American establishment—believed their world to be the deserved outcome of centuries of progress. Supremely confident, they assumed that what they considered to be more primitive people should respect the same social ideals—that so far as they were unwilling or unable to adopt them they were backward, and that so far as they did adopt them, they became "civilized." Moral endeavor, derived from Christianity, was secularized and detached from religion. An Englishman, Issac Taylor, in his *Ultimate Civilization*, published in 1860, defined this moral ideal in contrast to "relics of barbarism" soon to disappear through Euroculture's advance: "Polygamy, Infanticide, Legalized Prostitution, Capricious Divorce, Sanguinary and Immoral Games, Infliction of Torture, Caste and Slavery."

As Palmer pointed out even in 1950, over forty years ago, such European hubris and reasoned arrogance has exhausted itself, and the claim of European cultural supremacy has long been open to question or repudiated. What Palmer did not say, Euroculture remains the world in which to some extent, all humankind lives—or wishes to live. It defines the common

An excerpt from the American Federation of Teachers' 1990 resolution on multicultural education provides a balanced view of multiculturalism and the common culture.

The United States is one of the world's most diverse multicultural societies. To appreciate this inheritance and all who contributed to it, our children need a multicultural education. In the past, our schools taught only what was perceived as mainstream, and sought to minimize controversies over race, religion, and ethnicity by ignoring them. But without knowledge of the many streams that nourish the general society, the "mainstream" cannot be properly studied or understood. This is why our children need a multicultural curriculum, one in which the contributions and roles of African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, Native-Americans, Asian-Americans and other minorities are fairly and accurately depicted, and one in which the history of non-Western societies is part of the required curriculum.

As a multicultural people, we are also, however, a single nation bonded by a common set of democratic principles, individual rights and moral values. To understand and defend the very principles and institutions that provide our society its common aspirations, and allow us in our multicultural society to live together in relative peace—as compared to the constant warfare that tears apart so many other non-homogeneous societies—our children need an education in the humanities that imparts to them the values of tolerance, freedom, equality, pluralism and common human dignity. This also is part of a multicultural education; and while such values and principles can be conveyed using ideas and documents from a range of cultures, such an education also requires, unavoidably, a special emphasis on the history and legacies of those societies that have been most important in developing democratic ideals and practices.

vocabulary, even of revolutionaries. The languages of Europe are the first or second languages of most of the world's people, and English has become a *lingua franca* of educated people on all continents. Euro-American systems of finance and communication and information exchange are global standards, as are industrial and technological creations—mechanical energy, sanitation systems, medicine, and organic and silicon-based chemistry.

The United States inherits a complex political philosophy rooted in the rules of law, contract, and property, encased in a federal structure of limited government and based on citizen consent. This is a tradition that operates through the system of representative democracy and defines the ideas of human rights and liberty. From Europe it inherits many courtesies of speech and behavior and many foundations of literature, music, and design. From non-Western cultures explored and studied during the last two centuries it has borrowed new modes and forms. Today, the United States remains a sentinel to people in other parts of the world, many of whom face excruciating want, disease, inadequate diets, civil wars, diverse forms of repression, servitude, and the humiliation of females. Gradually, it has absorbed and welcomed the multiethnic contributions that have changed the way all Americans live.

Is it possible to be multicultural and Eurocentric? Perhaps at least for those who think that understanding the nation's political and economic system may best begin with the study of the Magna Carta or steam engine. The issue boils down to the question: Are all lands, people, events, perspectives, and ideas as historically significant as others?

NOTED WITH INTEREST

★ Two noteworthy books have appeared in recent months, each a collection of essays by textbook critics and experts that together do much to piece together the many-angled production, content, and marketing issues in textbooks today. Both books concentrate on social studies, always the most complex area in terms of subject and craft. *Textbooks in American Society: Politics, Policy, and Pegagogy* is edited by Philip G. Altbach et al., and is published by the State University of New York Press. The second is entitled *The Textbook Controversy: Issues, Aspects, Perspectives.* Edited by John G. Herlihy, and available through Ablex Publishing Corporation, it is the result of a lively conference in 1989 that covered then emergent textbook issues.

★ The Florida Commission on Social Studies Education was established in January 1988 by state superintendent Betty Castor to review the status of social studies education in Florida public schools. The state recently issued the framework, "Connections, Challenges and Choices." This is an important and encouraging state-level curriculum model for grades kindergarten through twelfth. It recommends a program of study emphasizing history and geography. The 161-page document sets high standards and includes a rich assortment of subjects, literary sources, multicultural approaches, and correlations with the humanities.

The Florida framework introduces ancient and medieval civilizations in the third grade. In fourth and fifth grade, it places U.S. and Florida history in a combined two-year sequence. The sixth grade is devoted to the geography of Asia and Africa, and seventh grade, to the geography of Europe and the Western Hemisphere. The tenth-grade course covers American history to 1920 and is followed by a combined twentieth century European, U.S., and world history in the eleventh grade.

The framework includes many examples to link the study of history and geography with the humanities. Suggested materials are wide ranging, from Omar Khayyam and Noh drama to *All Quiet on the Western Front.* Suggested biographies include Hernando de Soto, Montezuma, Zora Neal Hurston, and even Gloria Estevez. It also correlates study with music, art, and architecture.

The framework gracefully rejects the near-to-far approach in the primary grades. It stitches into early curricula history in the form of legends, heroes, symbols; it begins the narrative study of critical events from the past as early as third grade; and it emphasizes geography. These are welcome reforms by a large state just now undergoing a major textbook adoption.

The framework seeks to:

- "develop well-educated people who share a body of knowledge, preserve a set of values, understand common cultural allusions, and are prepared to participate with confidence in the dynamics of political, economic and social groups."
- create "minds that are well-stocked with information about people in time, in space and in culture."
- help students "recognize conditions detrimental to human development and opportunity, (so they can) resist such conditions as bigotry, ignorance and provincialism."

We hope this is more than rhetoric. The textbook submissions to Florida and what the state does with them will be interesting to watch in the coming months.

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SOCIAL STUDIES REVIEW

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EUROPE RECONSIDERED

Only about 44 percent of the nation's high school students take a world history course, according to the U.S. Department of Education. In such courses, European history—notably European political and intellectual history—has shrunk drastically, just as it has in many curriculum frameworks and textbooks during the last twenty years. This has happened in spite of Europe's vast influence on the political, legal, and religious institutions of the United States, the continent's decisive influence on world affairs, and the monumental changes in its economic structure and political cosmography.

In this issue of the *Social Studies Review* we share some thoughts about events in Europe past and present. The U.S. has been locked for more than a year in a national debate over Christopher Columbus and the European discovery of the New World. We thus offer John J. Patrick's critical review of recent books on the subject and C. Vann Woodward's illuminating thoughts, giving background to the controversy. Moreover, we consider a number of breaking events in Europe that bear immediate notice. These include important developments in Eastern Europe and the formulation of the European Community.

Unfortunately, the curious charge of Eurocentrism continues to be leveled at new curricula, even at the self-consciously inclusive history textbooks and courses of study developed during the last five years. Either the critics fail to examine the actual texts and syllabi, or they remain so invested in revisionism that no reasoned history will satisfy their crusading spirit. European educators and intellectuals are puzzled by the label of Eurocentrism, with reason. *Très moderne*, they welcome self-examination, revision, and breadth in historical studies. But some find the reckless depreciation and abandonment of Euro-American letters, science,

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Events in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, in the Balkans, and in the European Community make the the study of the continent more important than ever, in spite of lurid complaints of Eurocentrism.

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The Columbian Quincentenary is over now. What did it all mean? A noted educator and historian consider the encounter and revisionism one last time.

Page 11 .....An Announcement

The American Textbook Council undertakes two major projects.

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and history in some United States schools simply bizarre.

Moving Beyond Textbooks

As the school year opened, anti-European multiculturalism in vogue during the past few years was confined principally to the symbolic colloquium over Columbus. In fact, this fall, few substantive topics of academic interest or the curriculum were under discussion. Condoms, perhaps, and self-esteem. Choice, of course, for parents who think that their public schools are teaching a curriculum from another planet—and thus meet the contempt of "enlightened" educators head on. No matter what their partisan beliefs, many parents are appalled by the laxity and oddness of the curriculum. They may pray for a drug-free campus. The continuing and angry drift from the common schools continues. Academic quality? For the moment that aspect of educational reform has moved mainly into the federal effort to set national subject standards in basic subjects. And their future? That seems uncertain in the volatile political climate of 1992.

The nation is going into the tenth year of a school reform movement, one that is faltering. No doubt, since the landmark U.S. government report, *A Nation at Risk* (1983), the movement wrought a new cycle of thought about academic performance, effective schools, and civic education. It laid bold challenges to the shopworn claims of progressive education policy and statute. It reconstructed the basic curriculum in numerous books and essays with the support of the U.S. Department of Education, National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Federation of Teachers, and distinguished education experts and intellectuals. Yet these ideas and proposals have failed so far to capture the energy or enthusiasm of the education bureaucracies or curricular interest groups. Nor have they appealed to the many beneficiaries of systemic rigidity in public education. In fact, the reformism of the 1980s ended in discordant confusion as multiculturalism and self-esteem reigned supreme.

Perhaps we should be pleased that virtually all reputable scholars have rejected the claims of Afrocentrism, an inflammatory and anti-historical movement of great force just two years ago. Still, the publisher of *The New York Times*, Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, Jr., addressing a June meeting of the Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association in a videotaped message, told the reporters: "We can no longer offer our readers a predominantly white, straight, male vision of events and say we're doing our job." What that vision of events is, no one can say, for the premise is intellectually flawed. Yet such fractional views of reality and experience cannot help but filter into the schools, especially when they are ideas transmitted from the most powerful epicenters of thought, opinion, and culture.

The therapeutic mentality has fairly colonized the premier schools of education. There is, quite plainly, no alternative view. Many curriculum leaders disdain traditional forms of knowledge, pitching a "restructured program" that always seems to slip away from academic learning. Some teachers seem bored by the basic subjects. Rigorous techniques such as drill and recitation have fallen into ignominy. Forward-thinking courses seek to liberate students from old attitudes, as though from Dickensian prisons, ever mindful of the boundaries of traditional authority and always flushed at the notion of individual assertion. Eco-consciousness has become a growth area in the curriculum, providing a quasi-religious creed for otherwise secular youngsters. For healthy per diems, new modes of thought are dispensed by experts, so that the subject of an in-service workshop for Bronx high school teachers is "emotional fitness" and "discovering your inner child." The tireless feminist and new age circuit rider Peggy McIntosh of Wellesley College informs impressionable teachers that male competitiveness in U.S. classrooms is a principal threat to educational progress and world peace.

Like the outer culture, schools seem to be retreating from basic knowledge. No longer believing in the majesty of the liberal arts and sciences, impatient with memory and remembrance, many schools now function to advance students toward an imagined world where distinctions of intellect and value need not apply. These conditions are neither universal nor intractable. But they do suggest that much work remains to be done to improve the humanities and social studies in schools.

EUROPE TODAY

Since 1989, Americans of all ages have witnessed landmark events in Europe: the collapse of the Soviet empire, the rearrangement of Eastern Europe, the bitter resumption of age-old ethnic hostilities in the Balkans, and the halting formation of a pan-European economic union. Concepts like balance of power, sovereignty, nationalism, and market economy suddenly have new immediacy. The conversion of a continental region to capitalism after four generations of central planning? The future of the nuclear arsenal on former Soviet soil? The agonic bloodshed of Yugoslavia? These are matters of pressing interest to us all. To deprive students of issues, events, and concepts out of interest in non-historical and non-European subject content in social studies programs is unsound. Can American students comprehend the multitude of languages, polities, and cultures in the Eurasian land mass, encompassing Norway and Gibraltar, the Baltic and the Bosphorus? In the 1980s the concept of diversity was applied almost exclusively to non-Europeans.

In Germany and Eastern Europe, then the Soviet Union, and now Yugoslavia, in one high-profile country after another, governments have collapsed. The atomization of the Communist Bloc is matched by the unsteady construction of the European Community, its significance impossible to understand without passing knowledge of the imperial dreams of Napoleon, Bismarck, and Hitler. These ongoing changes have caught educators—like everybody else—by surprise.

All world history textbooks, of course, are out of date now—no fault of their own. History is a dynamic subject without end, ever more speculative as it moves forward from the well-chronicled past. Yet educators, especially social studies teachers, are supposed to be able to answer students' questions about these changes and provide some context as to the causes of change.

The yearning for freedom in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union might strike many young Americans as curious. Unburdened by a bloodstained recent history, living in a secure and free country, they have the luxury of being able to ignore world affairs. Will American students automatically think that all will turn out for the best? Or taking freedom for granted, will they even care if it does? Will students appreciate the political and economic gulf between West and East, or how the variations will be resolved now that capitalism has become a global system of economy? Without a firm idea of what communism is, can they understand the reasons for its demise? Can young people accustomed to neat television-like endings comprehend events that may take years to resolve—and sometimes seem to be going in many directions at once?

Textbook Content

Textbooks cannot be blamed for their failure to include geopolitical developments that are prime-time current events. But textbook buyers and consumers rightly expect the background information, narrative, biographies, maps and illustrations so students can grasp the evolution of eastern European affairs and the Russian domination of Eurasia. In social studies textbooks, the treatment of the Soviet empire that so shortly ago stretched from Poland to the Bering Strait generally exhibits a degree of mystery and elision. Mass-market social studies textbooks are generally blasé about totalitarian oppression and violations of human rights in Soviet history, perhaps because they are written in the spirit of détente and accommodation. Even the fresh and admirable new text by Janet C. Valliant and John Richards, *From Russia to USSR and Beyond* (Longman, 1993) has difficulty capturing the enormity of the Stalinist horrors of the 1930s.

Few textbooks stress the repressive character of daily life, thus failing to illustrate the fundamental differences between Soviet and American life, e.g., restricted access to computers and the proscription of unregistered copying machines by regimes that feared unfettered access to information and free inquiry. They fail to emphasize the tyranny of government clerks and police, a world where dissent or lack of cooperation led to punishment, where fear quashed individuality and initiative.

Eastern Europe and Russia

When the main themes of Russian and Soviet history in world history courses are considered anew, the place to begin is with geography.

After all, the climate in most of the region is challenging and often rotten, with long cold winters and few all-year "warm weather" ports. Still, vast hinterlands of Russia, Belarus, and the Ukraine are rich agricultural territories. Abundant supplies of minerals and timber lie in the mountain areas of the Urals and beyond. From the Middle Ages, arable lands supported Russian expansionism outward from the Baltic and Muscovy. These were cultivated by a peasant population accustomed to peonage. Ultimately Russian power straddled German, Turkic, and Mongolian lands.

No longer should text or teacher mince words about the nature of the Soviet nation between 1919 and 1991. Despised by liberal Europeans in the nineteenth century for its harsh treatment of its common people, the Russian Empire and Romanov dynasty fell, only to be replaced by a centralized dictatorship in the 1920s. For the next seven decades, Soviet citizens existed to serve the state, living sparely in order to finance its edifice, its technologies, and its weapons. Bureaucratic terror, corruption, and cynicism—the logic of totalitarianism—endured, enhanced by military strength and police action. Popular unrest in Soviet-occupied satellites was visible from the 1940s, in the 1956 Hungarian uprising, and the 1968 Czechoslovakian revolt. Yet few—including the eminent strategist and diplomat George Kennan—could forecast rapid-fire events like the breach of the Berlin Wall in 1989. In the absence of military terror, proletarian citizens once resigned to oppressive regimes ceased to abide exploitation or command bureaucracies. Then after 1989, a series of bloodless declarations brought to an end the geopolitical arrangements of almost half a century. The Soviet war machine withdrew from Eastern Europe, lost its constitutional authority at home, and survived a coup and countercoup, only to collapse in December 1991 with the resignation of President Mikhail S. Gorbachev.

The question in the 1990s, of course, will be the bridge of former Eastern European and Soviet domains into the global system of market capitalism. The possibility of military reaction or economic breakdown is considerable.

Nuclear Weapons

What will be the future of the awesome military technology that shaped and frightened the world after Hiroshima? The end of the Cold War has left a toll on the "peace education" curricula popular in the 1980s, and the fearmongering that marked such lessons has diminished. Theories of moral equivalency and aggressive American imperialism seem dated indeed. But this does not mean that the nuclear future is irrelevant. An excellent review in the Spring 1992 issue of the *Carnegie Quarterly* examined the issues of weapons access, control devices, operational procedures, and storage and transport protocols, highlighting an influential 1991 Harvard study that warned that nuclear weapons could fall into unauthorized hands through the desertion or mutiny of military custodians. Political groups or terrorists, through smuggling, could buy weapon components from unauthorized groups or purchase the technical knowledge of weapon scientists living in the former Soviet Union. Nations and terrorist groups in other parts of the world could seek to obtain nuclear weapons, fissionable materials, or difficult-to-obtain weapon components from the republics.

Ethnic Hatreds

The Yugoslavian civil war is a conflict of scale and ferocity not seen in Europe since 1945. First the dominant Serbians fell upon the "breakaway" Croatians. Then, Bosnia declared itself an independent state—after centuries of external rule, to be recognized by the major powers of Europe—only to be leveled and carved up by the Croatians and Serbians acting in collusion. Bosnian hopes rested on Western intervention that did not occur. The forced removal of Bosnian Muslims from their ancestral towns and homes has created a large population of refugees. How many dead are not known. Estimates range from twenty to one hundred thousand.

Yugoslavia provides a casebook study of centuries-old ethnic hatreds, complicated by the trilateral religious dimension of self-conscious Roman Catholics, Muslims, and Eastern Orthodox Christians. The current battles raging across the Balkan peninsula require some understanding of the historical conflict of Austrian and Ottoman empires, the fault lines of Christendom and Islam, the imperfect combina-

tion of Yugoslavia from the Treaty of Versailles, the emergence of a Serbian-dominated Communist nation after World War II, and Tito's adherence to a nationalistic communism uniquely independent of Moscow. The study of Yugoslavia likewise requires some sense of the vast economic and cultural contrasts of the region, which stretches from the fertile and rich southern Austrian foothills to Adriatic seaports and the bazaars of Macedonia.

The vicious ethnic hatreds of Yugoslavia (or Georgia, former S.S.R.) should remind Americans of their relative ethnic comity and redouble their commitment to affirmative, assimilationist kinds of cultural studies, respectful of the uses of European political and economic history. Their intensity should also remind American teachers and students that the threat of armed conflict cannot be ruled out.

European Community

At the same time, somewhat awkwardly, from Scandinavia to Turkey, the steps beyond a common market into a fuller federation proceed inexorably—in spite of the self-questioning and skepticism of its constituent parts. The Treaty of Maastricht? The power of German trade and currency? Investment in former Soviet satellites? The issues of agricultural subsidy, competitive advantage, and immigration? These are topics of crucial importance to the future of Europe, a continent of 500 million people. They are also subtle and complicated issues, perhaps more adequately tackled in higher-level economics electives than in comprehensive world history courses.

Conclusions

In European civilization are to be found most institutional antecedents of our own. The continent is undergoing major changes today both in the East and West. History should not minimize the violent conflicts of human history still with us, including the desire for unlimited power, religious purity, and racial domination. Such retrograde impulses are to be found in the West, to be sure. They are more starkly apparent in the Third World, however, to be observed in the miseries of the Central American and Andean Indians, of African slaves, and of Pakistani and South Asian women.

COLUMBUS: THE VERDICT

Now that the dust is settling on the turbulent Columbian Quincentenary, we return to the issue one last time, hoping to bring the subject to an honorable rest.

This is known: Early one morning five hundred years ago, several men rowed from their caravels toward land to encounter naked and amazed people standing on the shore. Their leader, Christopher Columbus, a Genoese navigator sailing under the Castilian flag, believed this small island they had encountered lay near the continent of India, and he called the people *Indios*. This was a mistake, but the name has remained. The islands are called West Indies, and to this day the natives of the two continents of the Western Hemisphere are known widely as American Indians. The European invaders could not imagine that nine or ten million Indians populated a vast American continent, speaking languages as different as English and Chinese.

When Christopher Columbus was born in the mid-fifteenth century, Europe was fully isolated from the Americas, and vice versa. But its trading culture was expanding, and the increasing Ottoman power in the eastern Mediterranean made alternative routes to Asian markets very attractive. Concurrently, devout Europeans sought to move the borders of Christendom to encompass the world. The voyages of Columbus opened a period of European exploration and empire building that breached the boundaries of isolated continents and forever changed the course of human history.

Some scholars and navigators of the fifteenth century believed not only that the world was round, but that a western sea route to the Orient was plausible. Ironically, Columbus was not looking for new worlds to conquer but for a seaborne route to the fabulously rich markets of Asia. In Columbus' time, the dream of the Orient inspired many Europeans. (Christopher Columbus was an avid reader of Marco Polo.) If someone could only find a better link to the East, Asian markets would supply untold riches, it was thought, and Asian peoples could be converted to Christianity. What set Columbus apart from other such thinkers was his single-minded dedication to turning that dream into a reality.

For the first hundred years after that fateful landfall, the Americas were dominated by the Spanish. They seized control of the core of the inhabited regions of two continents. They established hundreds of cities, missions, and churches, and they created an imperial structure that would remain more or less intact for three centuries. Native Americans were vulnerable to European diseases and outmatched by military technology. Their subjugation, decimation, and misfortunes in the era of the *conquistadores* are now universally recorded and lamented in texts. But for some this is not adequate. "While Columbus didn't actually insert the sword in the millions of people who died, he started the process of enslavement, murder, disease, pollution, and racism that came after exploration and conquest," the chairman of the Ohio Center for Native American Affairs said recently. "To us, he's Hilter."

Five hundred years after Columbus reached the Americas, few Americans talk of celebration. More talk darkly of encounter or invasion. While the commemorations are muted, a wealth of scholarship and examination has resulted from the controversies. A magisterial synthesis by William D. Phillips, Jr., and Carla Rahn Phillips, *The Worlds of Christopher Columbus* (Cambridge, 1992) provides a cool-headed and balanced review of the events surrounding the encounter, indispensable reading for scholars and historians. Of interest to teachers may be a short guide entitled *Columbus on Trial* published by the Washington, D.C.-based Young America's Foundation that attempts to refute some of the extreme negativism that has struck a dominant chord.

The idea of an American Eden long ago captured the hearts and minds of Europeans. Pastoral romantics sometimes view the pre-Columbian world as an earthly paradise despoiled by European savagery. Not so, unless one wishes to consider cannibalism, human sacrifice, slavery, and phenomenal rates of infant mortality as part of heaven on earth. In fact, in European courts and universities of the sixteenth century the treatment and rights of indigenous people in the Americas was hotly debated. As *Columbus on Trial* notes, many who idealize pre-Columbian America reveal their profound discontent with modern life.

COLUMBUS IN THE CURRICULUM

by John J. Patrick

The voyages of Columbus are a true turning point in world history. After 1492, people and civilizations of long-separated regions began to develop connections that have led to the incipient global community of the 1990s. Cultural and biological transactions were started that have continuously moved and mixed people, plants, animals, goods, and ideas from one hemisphere to another to create one world. This global moment constitutes a great turning point in human history, one that justifies a prominent place in today's school curriculum for the four Columbus voyages, not the mere fact of the 1992 quincentenary.

The primary purpose of teaching about the Columbian voyages, or anything else in the school curriculum, should be the achievement of knowledge and cognitive skills by students. Traditional curricula that uncritically glorified Columbus and the consequences of his voyages fell far short of this principal purpose of authenticity and accuracy needed to develop students' cognitive capacities and knowledge of reality. What follow are five keys to accurate, cogent, nonideological, and balanced treatments of the Columbian voyages in the school curriculum.

The Columbian Exchange

Consider the extraordinary biological and cultural consequences of 1492. The far-reaching and transforming interactions of people in the Western and Eastern hemispheres are known today as the Columbian Exchange, the name of a seminal book by Alfred W. Crosby. Crosby points out: "The connection between the Old and New Worlds...became on the twelfth day of October 1492 a bond as significant as the Bering land bridge had once been. The two worlds...which were so very different began on that day to become alike. That trend toward biological homogeneity is one of the most important aspects of the history of life on this planet since the retreat of the continental glaciers."

Crosby provided an ecological perspective on the conditions and consequences of the Columbian voyages that should be included in

the school curriculum. He examined how plants, pathogens, and animals moved from one hemisphere to the other and changed natural environments and cultures. He described the devastating effects of Eastern hemisphere microbes on Western hemisphere people and the subsequent shifts in the genetic composition of populations in the Americas. However, Crosby emphasized that the Columbian Exchange has not been one-sided. Certainly European and African plants, animals, goods, and ideas have affected Amerindians. But the people of the Western hemisphere influenced Europeans, Africans, and Asians, too, especially in their cultivation of crops and preparation of foods.

Geography

Geographic tools and analysis can be indispensable aids to interpreting and understanding events and developments of history, like the Columbian voyages and their consequences. This point is made convincingly by D. W. Meinig in his ground-breaking project, *The Shaping of America: A Geographical Perspective on 500 Years of History*, the first volume of which covers Atlantic America before 1800. According to Meinig, "Geography and history are not only analogous, but complementary and interdependent, bound together by the very nature of things."

Individuals in History

The term great person in history is not necessarily used to denote extraordinary goodness or virtue; rather, it applies to those who have had the most far-reaching effects on the shape of our world. Thus, Columbus can be considered a great man because his decisions and deeds have had great global effect, from his era to our own times. One key to understanding the Columbian voyages and their consequences is accurate information and interpretation about Columbus and his deeds. Teachers and students need to distinguish the facts from the many myths about the life and times of Columbus. They should, therefore, consult the best biographical literature on Columbus. One recommended source is the time-honored biography by Samuel Eliot Morison, *Admiral of the Ocean Sea*, which emphasizes the skills of Columbus as a sailor, leader, and visionary.

In recent years, Columbus has been treated less sympathetically by biographers. For example, Kirkpatrick Sale, in *The Conquest of Paradise*, portrays Columbus as a rapacious destroyer of people, cultures, and physical environments, and he traces current worldwide ecological problems directly to the deeds of Columbus and his followers. Sale is so intent on discrediting Columbus and his Western civilization that he fails critically and realistically to examine the cultures and behavior of indigenous Western people encountered and vanquished by the Europeans. For example, Sale does not bother to examine the harsh imperialism of the Aztecs, which influenced many subjugated people of their realm to join the Spanish forces in the final victorious assault on Tenochtitlan. Sale's book reflects current standards of judgment among certain critics of Western civilization and disregards the prevailing attitudes and norms of Columbus' era. Thus, Sale's biography and others of its genre are unreliable guides to the personality and behavior of Columbus, because they interpret and evaluate him outside the context of his space and time in history.

By contrast, a new biography by Felipe Fernandez-Armesto has won high praise from scholarly reviewers for its judicious treatment of Columbus within his European context. Fernandez-Armesto does not characterize Columbus as a hero or villain. Instead, he strives to judge Columbus and his followers as we might hope future historians will judge us—by the standards of our times, not by the conventions and trends of their times. Fernandez-Armesto's scholarly biography, unlike Sale's book, is a blend of sympathy and antipathy about the trials and triumphs of Columbus, his achievements as a navigator and his failures as an administrator. Teachers should follow the example of Felipe Fernandez-Armesto in developing realistic classroom portrayals of Columbus, free of special pleading for contemporary political causes.

Multiple Viewpoints

A persistent threat to accurate and balanced treatments of the Columbian voyages is ethnocentric or monolithic interpretation. The school curriculum has often been partial to narrow,

one-dimensional or monocultural treatments of the Columbian voyages, which have ignored or glossed over the diverse viewpoints of Amerindian and African people.' Improved teaching and learning about the Columbian voyages must include the various voices of the fateful encounters among the diverse cultures of four continents and three races.

In *America in 1492* Alvin Josephy provides an excellent scholarly source of knowledge about the diverse Amerindian cultures, before and during the Columbian voyages. Two valuable sources of Amerindian viewpoints on the European invasion of their lands are *Cultures in Contact*, edited by William Fitzhugh, and *Two Worlds: The Indian Encounter with the European: 1492 - 1509* by S. Lyman Tyler.

African and African-American views of the Columbian voyages are closely tied to a far-reaching and profound consequence of the Columbian Exchange—the Atlantic slave trade. African slavery began in the Western hemisphere in 1502, when the governor of Hispaniola, Nicholas de Ovando, imported human beings to work on the sugarcane plantations of his Caribbean island. In a few years, the use of African slaves had spread to other Spanish colonies, such as Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Jamaica. By 1650, more than 175,000 slaves had been taken from Africa to Spanish America. And another 100,000 or more had been brought to the Portuguese colony of Brazil.

Two highly recommended sources for teachers are Phillip D. Curtin's *The Atlantic Slave Trade* and *The Tropical Atlantic in the Age of the Slave Trade*. Basil Davidson's *The African Slave Trade* is also an excellent source that presents the African context of the trade in human beings. In teaching about the Atlantic slave trade as a consequence of the Columbian voyages, teachers should point out that slavery in Africa had existed long before European traders engaged in this vile business after the Columbian voyages. Arab traders, for example, sent more than fourteen million Africans eastward, mostly to Muslim countries. A full scholarly treatment of this Islamic slave trade is presented by Bernard Lewis in *Race and Slavery in the Middle East*. Lewis documents the large-scale shipment of slaves to the Islamic countries of Southwest Asia and North Africa, which continued long after the termination of the slave trade in the West.

Primary Materials

If teachers are to supply a multiplicity of viewpoints and perspectives on the Columbian voyages, they should move beyond the textbooks to lessons based on primary documents. This is one way to provide realistic and detailed treatments of diverse viewpoints. *The Log of Christopher Columbus* can be the basis for challenging and illuminating teaching and learning activities. For the enthusiast and the specialist, a twelve-volume collection of primary documents, *Repertorium Columbianum*, will be published in English translation in 1992 and 1993. These primary materials include Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, and Nahuatl (the language of the Aztecs) source texts related to Columbus' voyages and subsequent Spanish settlement in the Caribbean region and Mexico.

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THE FALL OF THE AMERICAN ADAM: MYTHS OF INNOCENCE AND GUILT

By C. Vann Woodward

Collective guilt has not enjoyed the long growing season or the fertile seedbed of tradition from which the myth of national innocence has perennially sprung. It has nevertheless struck roots and flourished of late in a climate that seems specially suited to it. And it has been nourished by a public that evidently feels a need for its fruits. A seller's market for guilt now exists, only whetted, not satiated in the 1960s. Though the demand may be inspired by recent events, the bargains in guilt are to be found mainly in the past. Ancestral atrocities and injustices, historic evils and inhumanities, and the brutalities and cruelties of past centuries can be acknowledged without assuming corresponding burdens of expiation. Ancient evils can thus be deplored and lamented, and pretensions of innocence scorned. But the grievances are antique and their perpetrators long gone. The guilt thus acknowledged can hardly be called redhanded.

The appreciating supply of historic guilt for the new market results not so much from revision of history or from new historic evidence as from the transposition of symbols and the inversion of myths. The new image of the past sometimes replaces the ethnocentrism of the mythmakers with that of its victims. Thus "discovery" of the New World becomes "invasion" thereof; "settlement" becomes "conquest," and Europeans the "savages." The "Virgin Land" becomes the "Widowed Land," the "howling wilderness" a desecrated Indian "hunting park." The "Garden of the World" becomes a "Waste Land," ravaged home of exterminated or endangered species. Samuel Flagg Bemis's "empty continent" teems with outraged and betrayed First Americans. The advancement of the Western frontier is sometimes pictured as a species of genocide, wave on wave of holocausts. One symbol that has been proposed to stand for the West so won is "A Pyramid of Skulls," Tartar model.

One of the ironies of the story is that the major burden of historic guilt was incurred in the age of innocence. Instead of ignoring the crimes, however, Americans of the earlier era often attacked and exposed them—not usually as collective guilt, but as the transgressions of individuals, groups, classes, sections—evils and injustices that threatened innocence and were to be corrected, punished, reformed, abolished. Slavery was the crime of Southern slave-holders, injustice to Indians the fault of frontiersmen or their agents and influence. And so, with whatever justice or accuracy, specific evils were assigned to culprits such as Indian-haters, lords of the lash, lords of the loom, political bosses, big business, jingoes, "merchants of death," and "economic royalists." Guilt was something to be redressed, and its exposers looked to the future for expiation. The American jeremiad, as Sacvan Berkovitch tells us, both laments an apostasy and heralds a restoration.

The new guilt is different. It is something congenital, inherent, intrinsic, collective, something possibly inexpiable, and probably ineradicable. The first English settlers, south as well as north, arrived with it in their hearts, and they never should have come in the first place. Invasion was their initial offense. The pattern of collective rapacity and inhuman cruelty to darker peoples that characterized their westward conquests of the Pacific shores and on across the ocean ever westward through Asia is seen as existing from the very outset. From this point of view the line of precedents stretched from the slaughter of braves in the Pequot War of 1637 on for three centuries and more to Lieutenant Calley at My Lai, with little more than changes in the technology of annihilation. Thus interpreted, American history becomes primarily a history of oppression, and the focus is upon the oppressed. The latter vary in color or identity as the center of interest shifts from one of these groups to another....

The primary objective in all this would not seem to be so much the exposure of evil or the identification of transgressors as it is an oblique exercise in the analysis of national character. And yet, "national" seems too comprehensive a word to be employed in its customary sense in this connection, for the characterizations are racially assigned or circumscribed, even though directed at the dominant

or majority group. A favored characterization, often quoted and sometimes misused, is a famous definition of "the myth of the essential white America" by D. H. Lawrence, published in 1923. "The essential American soul," he writes, "is hard, isolate, stoic, and a killer. It has never yet melted.... This is the very intrinsic-most American. He is at the core of all the other flux and fluff"—such as love and democracy and equality.

The exercise of defining national (or racial) character in terms of guilt attributes takes on some peculiar traits in the American instance. It might be called, in a sense, unilateral. In most instances, that is, the guilt is to all appearances unshared, the offenses incurring it unprovoked, unique, and confined to the dominant group. If other nations have perpetrated comparable or worse offenses against their native population, black slaves and freedmen, racial minorities, neighboring countries, or remote Asian or African cultures, the opportunities for perspective by comparing the magnitude of the offenses and the number of casualties are passed over. Those American offenses that were confined to intraracial conflict also go largely unremarked. That more American casualties were sustained in one battle of the Civil War than in all previous American wars, or that more Americans lost their lives in that war than in all subsequent wars of the nation goes unnoticed. Similar indifference in the national guilt market greets historic atrocities of one minority race against another, or intraracial mayhem among minorities.

Rejection of collective innocence and embracing of collective guilt have not invariably dispelled national myths that accompanied or sustained the myth of innocence. Inverting myths may be a way of preserving them. The quest for guilt continues to seek new and far-flung frontiers. When things go wrong in the Third World—and sometimes even in the Second—we are now taught to look inward for the cause. This teaching recalls by contrast the recent time when we were taught that America "held up a lamp" of hope to Asia and Africa. What has remained, if somewhat altered in the process, is the illusion of American omnipotence and moral responsibility and the cosmic self-centeredness of the national world view. "America," says a generally friendly Italian critic of ours, "is alone in the world."

Americans evidently have some special problems of a self-destructive nature in dealing with national guilt. If so, it is for no lack of guilt in the national and pre-national experience. The conquest of a continent, the dispossession and subjection of its natives, the exploitation of imported African slaves, the imposition of our will on other races and nations abroad, and the establishment of a brief Pax Americana by the world's most powerful nation are not exploits brought off without the incurring of guilt—impressive amounts of it. No intelligent citizen can have escaped awareness of this at some time. Still draped in legends of national infancy, myths of innocence, success, invincibility, and righteousness, however, we were caught short at the climax of our mythic national pretensions and exposed in deeds and failures that mocked all the old myths. It was then that the obsession with guilt took hold. Other nations with bloodier disgraces on their heads—Germany and her death camps; France and her Vichy and her Algeria; Japan and her imperial conquests; not to mention Russia and China with their multimillions of domestic victims—all seemed to manage recovery without excesses of self-detestation or self-revilement.

The new guilt is different. It is something congenital, inherent, intrinsic, collective, something possibly inexplicable, and probably ineradicable.

It is a Freudian truism I will not presume to attest that the problem of guilt is as much within the heart as within the act. Guilt looks inward. Psychoanalysts suggest that when a person inflicts punishment on himself, he should engage in historical recollection or exploration of the past to bring to consciousness and acceptance the cause of the guilt feelings. Presumably the same could be said of societies. We are also told on good authority that no one develops a sense of guilt without a punitive parent image—real or projectively imagined. We are guilty because we have not lived up to high standards represented by our parents. Or so we are told.

The curious thing about American experiments in self-therapy through the discovery and proclaiming of historic guilt is that it is the punitive progenitors themselves, the founding fathers and founding mothers, who have come to be regarded as the guilty parties—or at least the original sinners. As such they make rather poor punitive parent images, and provide their progeny with more escape from guilt than acceptance of it. When it is recent rather than historic transgression, the accusers conceive of it as the guilt of all. It is collective guilt. "When all are guilty," wrote Hannah Arendt, "no one is; confessions of collective guilt are the best possible safeguards against the discovery of culprits, and the very magnitude of the crime the best excuse for doing nothing."

Neither the old myth of innocence nor the self-therapy of historic or collective guilt has proved to be of much help to Americans with their problems. The sudden shift from the one extreme to the other may well portend a reaction in the opposite direction—and there are already some ominous signs of such a reaction.

C. Vann Woodward is professor of history emeritus at Yale University. This is excerpted from his article in *The Future of the Past* (Oxford, 1989), first published in the November 1981 *Bulletin* of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

NOTED WITH INTEREST

- The Agency for Instructional Technology in Bloomington, Indiana, has produced ten 20-minute videotapes that try to bridge history and geography, concentrating on particular events in American history. The programs, of high quality, include Chinese immigration, the Industrial Revolution in Pittsburgh, the building of the Panama Canal, and the organization of NATO. A video on the Dust Bowl examines how climatic changes led to barren fields, westward migration, and federal action. A teacher's guide to the series is also available. The tapes are distributed to schools and libraries through 34 state education agencies. An AIT referral service is located at 800-457-4509.
- Oak Park and River Forest High School near Chicago, Illinois, publishes an annual collection of student-produced essays and book reviews called *Interpretations*. It provides well-organized, concise, and substantiated essays written by students that teachers can use as models for their own students. Included in the current volume, for example, are reviews of classics like Barbara Tuchman's *The Guns of August*, and newly acclaimed books, such as *Dreadnought* by Robert K. Massie.
- A recent and admirable book bears special

The American Textbook Council announces two major projects that are now beyond the planning stage. First, the Council will release in late 1993 a standard of review for social studies textbooks. This guide to quality will review issues of content, style, and design. It will also include ratings of the major textbooks in history, geography, and civics. The guide will be distributed free of charge to paid subscribers and donors. It will be available for sale to others. This independent consumer's guide and review of research will be designed to:

- enhance the ability of states and districts to encourage, recognize, and select high-quality textbooks,
- allow jurisdictions to take more thoughtful and analytical approaches to judging how textbooks meet their curricular aims and their instructional goals,
- enable education policymakers to apply new and better selection criteria to history and social studies textbooks,
- give publishers direction in the preparation of effective and improved instructional materials, and
- raise the quality of textbooks by strengthening the market for better written books.

Secondly, the Council has begun preliminary research to conduct a survey of how religion is treated in social studies textbooks. This will result in a report to come out in early 1994. In the future, the *Social Studies Review* will keep its readers in close touch with the development of both projects. In the meantime, we thank the William H. Donner Foundation, Earhart Foundation, Richard Lounsbery Foundation, John M. Olin Foundation, and other donors for their support of these important projects.

attention. *Should Textbooks Challenge Students? The Case for Easier or Harder Books* (Teachers College Press, 1991) comes from Jean Chall and her colleagues at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. The title is a misnomer. It also asks an absurd question. In fact, the book is an important review of research on readability and textbook difficulty. It explores the uses of textbooks and their significance as instruments by which to organize information. On matters of dumbing down, the book's conclusions are equivocal, and, in places, opaque. It appears that high school history texts are below grade reading level and that difficulty has not changed much since the 1960s. The book concludes: "Perhaps, then, it is not that textbooks are intrinsically dull, but that we have lost the art of making and using them." Amen.

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